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THE WORKS

OF

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LEWIS MORRIS

TENTH THOUSAND

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD

1894

THE WORKS

OF JESSE MORRIS

BY JESSE MORRIS

LONDON

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SONGS OF TWO WORLDS.

FIRST SERIES (1872).

SOUL-MUSIC.

MY soul is as a bird
Singing in fair weather,
Deep in shady woodlands through the
evening's dewy calm ;
Every glossy feather
On her full throat stirred,
As she pours out, rapt, unconscious, all
the sweetness of her psalm ;
Mounting high, and higher, higher,
Soaring now, now falling, dying ;
Now through silvery pauses sigh-
ing ;
Throbbing now with joyous strife,
And rushing tides of love and life,
Till some ray of heavenly fire
Shot obliquely through the shade,
Pierces her ; and lo ! the strain
Of the music she has made
Fills her with a sudden pain.

Then she forgets to sing
Her former songs of gladness ;
Sitting mute in silence sweeter than the
old forgotten lays ;
Till anon some note of sadness,
Long-drawn, languishing,
Faint at first, swells onward slowly to
a subtler depth of praise,

As the low, wild, minor, broken
By the ghosts of gayer fancies,
Like a rippling stream advances,
Till the full tide grown too deep,
Whispers first, then falls asleep.
Then, as souls with no word spoken
Grow together, she, mute and still,
Thrills through with a secret voice,
Which the farthest heaven can fill,
And constrains her to rejoice.

And the passer-by who hears,
Not the burst of pleasure,
Swelling upward, sweet, spontaneous,
to the portals of the sky,
But a chastened measure,
Low and full of tears ;
And anon the voiceless silence, when
the last notes sink and die,
Deems some influence malign,
Checks the current of her song ;
For that none are happy long.
Nay ; but to the rapt soul come
Sounds that strike the singer dumb,
And the silence is Divine ;
For when heaven gives back the
strain,
All its joyous tones are o'er ;
First the low sweet notes of pain,
Then, the singer sings no more.

LOVE'S MIRROR.

I SEE myself reflected in thine eyes,
 The dainty mirrors set in golden flame
 Of eyelash, quiver with a sweet surprise,
 And most ingenuous shame.

Like Eve, who hid her from the dread
 command
 Deep in the dewy blooms of paradise ;
 So thy shy soul, love calling, fears to stand
 Discovered at thine eyes.

Or, like a tender little fawn, which lies
 Asleep amid the fern, and waking,
 hears
 Some careless footstep drawing near,
 and flies,
 Yet knows not what she fears :

So shrinks thy soul ; but, dearest, shrink
 not so ;
 Look thou into mine eyes as I in
 thine :
 So our reflected souls shall meet and
 grow,
 And each with each combine

In something nobler ; as when one has
 laid
 Opposite mirrors on a cottage wall ;
 And lo ! the never-ending colonnade,
 The vast palatial hall.

So our twin souls, by one sweet suicide,
 Shall fade into an essence more sub-
 lime ;
 Living through death, and dying glori-
 fied,
 Beyond the touch of time.

ON A YOUNG POET.

HERE lay him down in peace to take
 his rest,
 Who tired of singing ere the day was
 done.

A little time, a little, beneath the sun,
 He tarried and gave forth his artless
 song ;

The bird that sings with the dawn,
 sings not for long,
 Only when dew is on the grass his
 breast

Thrills, but his voice is silent long ere
 noon.

So sang he once, but might not long
 sustain

The high pure note of youth, for soon,
 too soon !

He ceased to know the sweet creative
 pain

Made still one voice, amid the clamorous
 strife,

And proved no more the joys or pains
 of life.

And better so than that his voice should
 fail,

And sink to earth, and lose its heaven-
 lier tone ;

Perchance, if he had stayed, the sad
 world's moan,

The long low discord of incessant
 wrong,

Had marred the perfect cadence of his
 song,

And made a grosser music to prevail.

But now it falls as pure upon the ear,
 As sings the brown bird to the star of
 eve,

Or child's voice in grey minster quiring
 clear.

Rather then, give we thanks for him
than grieve.

Thoughts of pure joys which but in
memory live,

More joy than lower present joys can
give.

For him, deep rest or high spontaneous
strains ;

For us, fierce strife and low laborious
song ;

For him, truth's face shining out clear
and strong ;

For us, half lights, thick clouds, and
darkling days.

No longer walks his soul in mortal
ways,

Nor thinks our thoughts, nor feels our
joys or pains

Nor doubts our doubts, nor any more
pursues,

Knowing all things, the far-off search-
less cause ;

Nor thrills with art, or nature's fairest
hues,

Gazing on absolute beauty's inmost
laws ;

Or lies for ever sunk in dreamless sleep,
Nor recks of us ;—and therefore 'tis we
weep.

But surely if he sleep, some fair faint
dream,

Some still small whisper from his an-
cient home,

Not joy, nor pain, but mixt of each
shall come ;

Or if he wake, the thought of earthly
days

Shall add a tender sweetness to his
praise ;

Tempering the unbroken joyance of his
theme.

And by-and-by the time shall come
when we,

Laden with all our lives, once more
shall meet,

Like friends, who after infinite wastes
of sea,

Look in each other's eyes ; and lo ! the
sweet

Sad fount of memory to its depths is
stirred,

And the past lives again, without a
word.

Mourn not for him ! perchance he lends
his voice

To swell the fulness of the eternal
psalm ;

Or haply, wrapt in nature's holy
calm,

Safe hid within the fruitful womb of
earth,

He ripens slowly to a higher birth.

Mourn not for him ! but let your souls
rejoice.

We know not what we shall be, but are
sure

The spark once kindled by the eternal
breath,

Goes not out quite, but somewhere
doth endure

In that strange life we blindly christen
death.

Somewhere he is, though where we can-
not tell ;

But wheresoe'er God hides him, it is
well.

TO THE SETTING SUN.

STAY, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast
away

For now it is that life revives again,

As the red tyrant sinks beneath the
hill ;

And now soft dews refresh the arid
plain ;

And now the fair bird's voice begins to
thrill ;

With hidden dolours making sweet
her strain

And wakes the woods that all day were
so still.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast
away ;

For now the rose and all fair flowers
that blow

Give out sweet odours to the perfumed
air,

And the white palace marbles blush
and glow,

And the low, ivy-hidden cot shows
fair.

Why are time's feet so swift, and
ours so slow ?

Haste, laggard ! night will fall ere you
are there.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast
away ;

Soon the pale full-faced moon will
slowly climb

Up the steep sky and quench the star
of love.

Moonlight is fair, but fairer far the
time

When through the leaves the dying
shafts above

Slope, and the minster sounds its
curfew chime,

And the long shadows lengthen through
the grove.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast
away ;

For, hark ! the chime throbs from
the darkling tower ;

Soon for the last time shall my love be
here :

Fair day, renew thy rays for one
brief hour.

O sweet day, tarry for us, tarry near ;
To-morrow, love and time will lose

their power,

And sighs be mine, and the unbidden
tear.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast
away.

But, ah ! thou may'st not ; in the
far-off west

Impatient lovers weary till you rise ;

Or may be caring naught thou
traversest

The plains betwixt thee and thy final
skies :

Go, then ; though darkness come,
we shall be blest,

Keeping sweet daylight, in each other's
eyes.

THE TREASURE OF HOPE.

O FAIR bird, singing in the woods,
To the rising and the setting sun,
Does ever any throb of pain

Thrill through thee ere thy song be
done :

Because the summer fleets so fast ;
Because the autumn fades so soon ;

Because the deadly winter treads
So closely on the steps of June ?

O sweet maid, opening like a rose
In love's mysterious, honeyed air,
Dost think sometimes the day will come
When thou shalt be no longer fair :

When love will leave thee and pass on
 To younger and to brighter eyes ;
 And thou shalt live unloved, alone,
 A dull life, only dowered with sighs ?

O brave youth, panting for the fight,
 To conquer wrong and win thee fame,
 Dost see thyself grown old and spent,
 And thine a still unhonoured name :
 When all thy hopes have come to naught,
 And all thy fair schemes droop and
 pine
 And wrong still lifts her hydra heads
 To fall to younger arms than thine ?

Nay ; song and love and lofty aims
 May never be where faith is not ;
 Strong souls within the present live ;
 The future veiled,—the past forgot :
 Grasping what is, with hands of steel,
 They bend what shall be, to their will ;
 And blind alike to doubt and dread,
 The End, for which they are, fulfil.

THE LEGEND OF FAITH.

THEY say the Lord of time and all the
 worlds,
 Came to us once, a feeble, new-born
 child ;
 All-wise, yet dumb ; weak, though om-
 nipotent :
 Surely a heaven-sent vision, for it tells
 How innocence is godlike. And the
 Lord
 Renews, through childhood, to our
 world-dimmed eyes,
 The half forgotten splendours of the
 skies.

And because motherhood is sacreder
 And purer far than any fatherhood,

White flowers are fairer than red fruit,
 and sense
 Brings some retributive pain ; the vir-
 gin queen
 Sits 'mid the stars, and cloistered courts
 are filled
 With vain regrets, dead lives, and
 secret sighs,
 And the long pain of weary litanies.

And because we, who stand upon the
 shore,
 See the cold wave sweep up and take
 with it
 White spotless souls, and others lightly
 soiled,
 Yet with no stain God deems indelible :
 These are His saints mighty to intercede,
 Those in some dim far country tarry,
 and there
 Are purified ; and both are reached by
 prayer.

And as the faith once given changes not,
 But we are weak as water ; yet is life
 A process, and where growth is not is
 death.

God gave His priests infallible power to
 tell
 The true faith as it is, and how it grew :
 And lo ! the monstrous cycle shows
 complete,
 And the Church brings the nations to
 her feet.

BY THE SEA.

A LITTLE country churchyard,
 On the verge of a cliff by the sea ;
 Ah ! the thoughts of the long years past
 and gone
 That the vision brings back to me

For two ways led from the village,—
 One, by the rippled sands,
 With their pink shells fresh from the
 ebbing wave
 For childish little hands.

And one 'mid the heath, and the
 threat'ning
 Loud bees with the yellow thighs,
 And, twinkling out of the golden furze,
 The marvellous butterflies.

And the boom of the waves on the
 shingle,
 And the hymn of the lark to the sun ;
 Made Sabbath sounds of their own, ere
 the chime
 Of the church-going bell had begun.

I remember the churchyard studded
 With peasants who loitered and read
 The sad little legends, half effaced,
 On the moss-grown tombs of the
 dead.

And the gay graves of little children,
 Fashioned like tiny cots ;
 With their rosemary and southernwood,
 And blue-eyed forget-me-nots.

Till the bell by degrees grew impatient,
 Then ceased as the parsonage door
 Opened wide for the surpliced vicar,
 And we loitered and talked no more.

I remember the cool, dim chancel,
 And the drowsy hum of the prayers ;
 And the rude psalms vollied from sea-
 faring throats
 As if to take heaven unawares.

Till, when sermon-time came, by per-
 mission
 We stole out among the graves,

And saw the great ocean a-blaze in the
 sun,
 And heard the deep roar of the waves.

And clung very close together,
 As we spelt out with wonder and
 tears,
 How a boy lay beneath who was
 drowned long ago,
 And was "Aged eleven years."

And heard, with a new-born terror,
 The first surge of the infinite Sea,
 Whose hither-shore is the shore of
 Death,
 And whose further, the Life to be.

"Did the sea swallow up little children ?
 Could God see the wickedness done ?
 Nor spare one swift-winged seraph to
 save
 From the thousands around His
 throne ?"

"Was he still scarce older than we
 were,
 Still only a boy of eleven ?
 Were child-angels children always
 In the beautiful courts of heaven ?"

Ah me ! of those childish dreamers,
 One has solved the dark riddle since
 then :
 And knows the dread secret which
 none may know
 Who walk in the ways of men.

The other has seen the splendour
 And mystery fading away ;
 Too wise or too dull to take thought or
 care
 For aught but the needs of the
 day.

VOICES.

OH ! sometimes when the solemn organ
 rolls
 Its stream of sound down gray historic
 aisles ;
 Or the full, high-pitched struggling
 symphony
 Pursues the fleeting melody in vain :
 Like a fawn through shadowy groves,
 or heroine
 Voiced like a lark, pours out in burning
 song
 Her love or grief ; or when, to the
 rising stars
 Linked village maidens chant the hymn
 of eve ;
 Or Sabbath concourse, flushed and
 dewy-eyed
 Booms its full bass ; or before tasks
 begun,
 Fresh childish voices sanctify the morn :
 My eyes grow full, my heart forgets to
 beat.
 What is this mystic yearning fills my
 being ?
 Hark ! the low music wakes, and soft
 and slow
 Wanders at will through flowery fields
 of sound ;
 Climbs gentle hills, and sinks in sunny
 vales,
 And stoops to cull sweet way-side
 blooms, and weaves
 A dainty garland ; then, grown tired,
 casts down
 With careless hand the fragrant coronal,
 And child-like sings itself to sleep.
 Anon
 The loud strain rises like a strong knight
 armed,

Battling with wrong ; or passionate seer
 of God
 Scathing with tongue of fire the hollow
 shows,
 The vain deceits of men ; or law-giver,
 Parting in thunder from the burning
 hill
 With face aflame ; or with fierce rush
 of wings
 And blazing brand, upon the crest of
 Sin,
 The swift archangel swooping ; or the
 roll
 Which follows on the lightning ;—all
 are there
 In that great hurry of sound.
 And then the voice
 Grows thinner like a lark's, and soars
 and soars,
 And mounts in circles, higher, higher,
 higher,
 Up to heaven's gate, and lo ! the un-
 earthly song
 Thrills some fine inner chord, and the
 swift soul,
 Eager and fluttering like a prisoned
 bird,
 Breaks from its cage, and soars aloft to
 join
 The enfranchised sound, and for a
 moment seems
 To touch on some dim border-land of
 being,
 Full of high thought and glorious
 enterprise
 And vague creative fancies, till at
 length
 Waxed grosser than the thin ethereal
 air,
 It sinks to earth again.
 And then a strain
 Sober as is the tender voice of home,
 Unbroken like a gracious life, and lo

Young children sit around me, and the
love
I never knew is mine, and so my
eyes
Grow full, and all my being is thrilled
with tears.

What is this strange new life, this finer
sense,
This passionate exaltation, which doth
force

Like the weird Indian juggler, instantly
My soul from seed to flower, from
flower to fruit,

Which lifts me out of self, and bids me
tread

Without a word, on dim ærial peaks,
Impossible else, and rise to glorious
thoughts,

High hopes, and inarticulate fantasies
Denied to soberer hours? No spoken
thought

Of bard or seer can mount so far, or
lift

The soul to such transcendent heights,
or work

So strong a spell of love, or roll along
Such passionate troubled depths. No
painter's hand

Can limn so clear, the luminous air
serene

Of Paradise, the halcyon deep, the
calm

Of the eternal snows, the eddy and
whirl

Of mortal fight, the furious flood let
loose

From interlacing hills, the storm which
grooms

Over the shoreless sea. Our speech too
oft

Is bound and fettered by such narrow
laws,

That words which to one nation pierce
the heart,

To another are but senseless sounds, or
weak

And powerless to stir the soul; but this
Speaks with a common tongue, uses a
speech

Which all may understand, or if it bear
Some seeds of difference in it, only
such

As separates gracious sisters, like in
form,

But one by gayer fancies touched, and
one

Rapt by sweet graver thoughts alone,
and both

Mighty to reach the changing moods of
the soul,

Or grave or gay, and though sometimes
they be

Mated with unintelligible words,
Or feeble and unworthy, yet can lend
A charm to gild the worthless utterance,
And wing the sordid chrysalis to float
Amid the shining stars.

Oh strange sweet power,
Ineffable, oh gracious influence,
I know not whence thou art, but this
I know.

Thou holdest in thy hand the silver key
That can unlock the sacred fount of
tears,

Which falling make life green; the
hidden spring

Of purer fancies and high sympathies:
No mirth is thine, thou art too high for
mirth,—

Like Him who wept but smiled not:
mirth is born

On the low plains of thoughts best
reached by words.

But those who scale the untrodden
mountain peak,

Or sway upon the trembling spire, are
 far
 From laughter ; so thy gracious power
 divine,
 Not sad but solemn, stirs the well of
 tears,
 But not mirth's shallow spring : tears
 are divine,
 But mirth is of the earth, a creature
 born
 Of careless youth and joyance ; satisfied
 With that which is ; parched by no
 nobler thirst
 For that which might be ; pained by
 no regret
 For that which was, but is not : but for
 thee.
 Oh, fair mysterious power, the whole
 great scheme
 Lies open like a book ; and if the
 charm
 Of its high beauty makes thee some-
 times gay,
 Yet 'tis an awful joy, so mixed with
 thought,
 That even Mirth grows grave, and
 evermore
 The myriad possibilities unfulfilled,
 The problem of Creation, the immense
 Impenetrable depths of thought, the
 vague
 Perplexities of being, touch thy lips
 And keep thee solemn always.
 Oh, fair voice,
 Oh virginal, sweet interpreter, reveal
 Our inner selves to us, lay bare the
 springs,
 The hidden depths of life, the high
 desires
 Which lurk there unsuspected, the
 remorse
 Which never woke before ; unclothe
 the soul

Of this its shroud of sense, and let it
 mount,
 On the harmonious beat of thy light
 wings,
 Up to those heights where life is so
 attuned,
 So pure and self-concordant ; filled so
 deep
 With such pervading beauty that no
 voice
 Mars the unheard ineffable harmony,
 And o'er white plain and breathless
 summit reigns
 A silence sweeter than the sweetest
 sound.

WEAKNESS MADE STRONG.

If I were poor and weak,
 Bankrupt of hope, and desolate of
 love ;
 Without a tongue to speak
 The strange dumb thoughts of thee
 which through me move ;
 Then would I freely venture, sweet,
 To cast my soul down at thy feet.
 Or were I proud and great ;
 Were all men envious, and all women
 kind,
 And yet my high estate
 Showed poor beside the riches of my
 mind :
 Then would I boldly stoop, to rise
 Up to the height of thy dear eyes.
 But being not weak nor strong,
 Cast in the common mould of
 coarser clay ;
 Sure 'twere to do thee wrong
 To set my humble homage in thy
 way,

And cloud thy sunny morn, which I
would fain
Keep clear and fair, with my poor
private pain.

Only since love and I are so ingrown,
That for my weakness is my love so
strong ;

And scarce I know what love's is, what
mine own,

Nor whether love or I inspire my
song :

Take thou my weakness to thy strength,
and give

Strength to my weakness, sweet, and
bid me live.

WAKING.

OPEN, my soul, thy stately portals
wide ;

Open full wide, and let thy King
come in !

How shall he come ? In royal pomp
and pride,

Ushered by braying trumpets' clamor-
ous din ;

Clothed round with purple ; crowned
with burning gold :

A kingly presence, glorious to behold ?

Nay ; for he is no mortal king, to come
With trumpet peals and crowds and
garish state ;

But silent to the soul he makes his
home,

He enters by some lowly postern
gate !

And she, within her chambers far with-
drawn,

Cries like the wakeful bird that greets
the dawn.

It may be she is seated 'mid the
throng,

Crowned with the flowers of life and
youth and health ;

Thrilled through by breathing art or
passionate song,

Or faint with hot pursuit of fame or
wealth ;

Rapt by the glorious thoughts of saints
or seers,

Or radiant with the blessed dew of
tears.

And then the wicket swings without a
sound,

And lo ! a ghostly presence, pale and
gray,—

Sad eyes which dwell not on the things
around,

But gaze for ever on the Far-off
Day !

Then a low voice, whispering, " Thy
King is come ;

Rejoice, be glad, for here he makes
his home."

Then rises she and hastens to the
gate,—

Her royal gate, and there she casts
her down :

Prone at his feet bewails her low
estate,

Yet prays him he will enter to his
own !

Spurns from her all her robes of pride,
and stands,

Knowing her shame, to do her Lord's
commands,

Whom with a touch he fashions for her
part ;

Dowers with the precious gifts of bard
or sage ;

The hand to fix the dreams of deathless
art,

The imperial will, the patriot's noble
rage :

Or fills with such fine affluence of love,
That she grows holy as the saints above.

Then open, O my soul ! thy portals
wide,

Open, and let thy Lord and Ruler
come ;

Open, if haply he may here abide,
And make within thee his eternal
home.

Open thy gates, thy halls, thine inmost
shrine,

Till all are flooded with the Light
divine.

AT HAVRE DE GRACE.

ABOVE the busy Norman town,
The high precipitous sea-cliffs rise,
And from their summit looking down
The twin-lights shine with lustrous
eyes ;

Far out upon the fields of foam,
The first to greet the wanderer home.

Man here has known at last to tame
Nature's wild forces to his will ;
Those are the lightning's fires which
flame,

From yon high towers with ray so
still :

And knowledge, piercing through the
night

Of time, has summoned forth the light.

And there, hard by the lighthouse door,

The earthly set by the divine ;

At a stone's cast, or scarcely more,

Rises a little pagan shrine,

Where the rough seamen come to pray,
And wives, for dear ones far away.

There, on a starry orb, there stands
A heavenly goddess, proud and fair ;
No infant holds she in her hands
Which must a queenly sceptre bear.
Nay ; wonder not, for this is she
Who rules the fury of the sea.

Star of the sea, they call her, yet
Liker to Heré doth she show,
Than Aphrodité, rising wet
From the white waves, with limbs
aglow.

Calmer she seems, more pure and
sweet,
To the poor kneelers at her feet.

Before her still the vestal fires
Burn unextinguished day and night ;
And the sweet frankincense expires
And fair flowers blow, and gems are
bright :

For a great power in heaven is she,
This star and goddess of the sea.

Around the temple, everywhere,
Rude tablets hung, attest her might ;
Here the fierce surge she smooths, and
there

Darts downward on a bar of light ;
To quench the blazing ship, or save
The shipwrecked from the hungry
wave.

And sea-gifts round the shrine are laid,
Poor offerings, costlier far than gold :
Such as the earlier heathen made,

To the twin Deities of old,—
Toy ships, shells, coral, glittering spar,
Brought here by grateful hands from
far.

A very present help indeed,
 This goddess is to whom they bow ;
 We seek Thy face with hearts that
 bleed,
 And straining eyes, dread Lord ! but
 Thou
 Hidest Thyself so far away,
 Our thoughts scarce reach Thee as we
 pray.

But is this she, whom the still voice
 Of angels greeted in the night ;
 Bidding the poor maid's heart rejoice,
 With visions hid from wiser sight :
 This heathen nymph, this tinselled
 queen,
 First of all mothers who have been ?

Gross hearts and purblind eyes, to
 make
 An idol of a soul so sweet !
 Could you no meaner essence take,
 No brazen image with clay feet ;
 No saint from out the crowd of lies,
 False signs and shameful prodigies ?

For this one bears too great a name,
 Above all other women blest ;
 The blessed mother,—all her fame
 Is His who nestled to her breast :
 They do but dull her glory down,
 These childless arms, this earthly
 crown.

Poor peasant mother ! scarce a word
 Thou spak'st, the long-drawn years
 retain ;
 Only thy womb once bare the Lord ;
 Only thou knew'st the joy, the
 pain,
 The high hope seeming quenched in
 blood
 That marked thy awful motherhood.

No trace of all thy life remains,
 From His first childhood to the
 cross ;

A life of little joys and pains,
 Of humble gain and trivial loss :
 Contented if the ewes should bear
 Twin lambs, or wheat were full in ear.

Or if sometimes the memory
 Of that dread message of the night
 Troubled thy soul, there came to thee
 New precious duties ; till the flight,
 The desert sands, the kneeling kings,
 Showed but as half-forgotten things.

Or sometimes, may be, pondering
 deep
 On miracles of word and deed,
 Vague doubts across thy soul would
 creep,
 Still faithful to the older creed :
 Could this thy son indeed be He,
 This child who prattled at thy knee ?

And of thy after-life, thy age,
 Thy death, no record ; not a line
 On all the fair historic page
 To mark the life these hold divine :
 Only some vague tradition, faint
 As the sick story of a saint.

But thou no longer art to-day
 The sweet maid-mother, fair and
 pure ;
 Vast time-worn reverend temples gray,
 Throne thee in majesty obscure ;
 And long aisles stretch in minsters
 high,
 'Twixt thee, fair peasant, and the sky.

They seek to honour thee, who art
 Beyond all else a mother indeed ;

With hateful vows that blight the heart,
 With childless lives, and souls that
 bleed :

As if their dull hymns' barren strain
 Could fill a mother with aught but
 pain !

To the gross earth they bind thee down
 With coils of fable, chain on chain ;
 From plague or war to save the town ;
 To give, or hold ; the sun, or rain ;
 To whirl through air a favourite
 shrine,—

These are thy functions, and divine.

And see, in long procession rise
 The fair Madonnas of all time ;
 They gaze from sweet maternal eyes,
 The dreams of every Christian clime :
 Brown girls and icy queens, the breast
 And childish lips proclaim them blest.

Till as the gradual legend grew,
 Born without stain, and scorning
 death ;

Heavenward thou soarest through the
 blue,

While saints and seers aspire beneath:
 And fancy-nurtured cam'st to be
 Queen over sky and earth and sea.

Oh, sin ! oh, shame ! oh, folly ! Rise ;
 Poor heathen, think to what you
 bow ;

Consider, beyond God's equal skies,
 What pains that faithful soul must
 know,—

She a poor peasant on the throne
 Raised for the Lord of Life, alone.

O sweet ! O heart of hearts ! O pure
 Above all purest maids of earth !
 O simple child, who didst endure
 The burden of that awful birth :

Heart, that the keenest sword didst
 know,
 Soul bowed by alien loads of woe !

Sweet soul ! have pity ; intercede,
 Oh mother of mothers, pure and
 meek ;

They know no evil,—rise and plead
 For these poor wandering souls and
 weak ;

Tear off those pagan rags, and lead
 Their worship where 'tis due indeed.

For wheresoever there is home,
 And mothers yearn with sacred
 love,
 There, since from Heaven itself they
 come.

Are symbols of the life above :
 Again the sweet maid-mother mild,
 Again the fair Eternal child.

WHEN I AM DEAD.

WHEN I am dead and turned to
 dust,

Let men say what they will, I care not
 aught ;

Let them say I was careless, indolent,
 Wasted the precious hours in dreaming
 thought,

Did not the good I might have done,
 but spent

My soul upon myself,—sometimes let
 rise

Thick mists of earth betwixt me and
 the skies :

What must be must.

But not that I betrayed a trust ;
 Broke some girl's heart, and left her to
 her shame ;

Sneered young souls out of faith ; rose
by deceit ;
Lifted by credulous mobs to wealth and
fame ;
Waxed fat while good men waned, by
lie and cheat ;
Cringed to the strong ; oppressed the
poor and weak :
When men say this, may some find
voice to speak,
Though I am dust.

LOVE'S SUICIDE.

ALAS for me for that my love is dead !
Buried deep down, and may not rise
again ;
Self-murdered, vanished, gone beyond
recall,
And this is all my pain.

'Tis not that she I loved is gone from
me,
She lives and grows more lovely day
by day ;
Not Death could kill my love, but
though she lives,
My love has died away.

Nor was it that a form or face more fair
Forswore my troth, for so my love
had proved
Eye-deep alone, not rooted in the soul ;
And 'twas not thus I loved.

Nor that by too long dalliance with
delight
And recompense of love, my love had
grown
Surfeit with sweets, like some tired bee
that flags
'Mid roses over-blown.

None of these slew my love, but some
cold wind,
Some chill of doubt, some shadowy
dissidence,
Born out of too great concord, did o'er-
cloud
Love's subtle inner sense.

So one sweet changeless chord, too long
sustained,
Falls at its close into a lower tone :
So the swift train, sped on the long,
straight way,
Sways, and is overthrown.

For difference is the soul of life and
love,
And not the barren oneness weak
souls prize :
Rest springs from strife, and dissonant
chords beget
Divinest harmonies.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

BRIGHT with unnumbered laughter,
and swollen by a thousand tears,
Rushes along, through upland and low-
land, the river of life ;
Sometimes foaming and broken, and
sometimes silent and slumbrous,
Sometimes through rocky glens, and
sometimes through flowery plains.
Sometimes the mountains draw near,
and the black depths swirl at
their bases,
Sometimes the limitless meads fade on
the verge of the sky,
Sometimes the forests stand round, and
the great trees cast terrible
shadows,
Sometimes the golden wheat waves, and
girls fill their pitchers and sing.

Always the same strange flow, through
changes and chances unchanging,
Always—in youth and in age, in calm
and in tempest the same—

Whether it sparkle transparent and
give back the blue like a mirror,
Or sweep on turbid with flood, and
black with the garbage of
towns—

Whether the silvery scale of the min-
now flash on the pebbles,
Or whether the poisonous ooze cling
for a shroud round the dead—

Whether it struggle through shoals of
white blooms and feathery
grasses,

Or bear on its bosom the hulls of ocean-
tost navies—the same.

Flow on, O mystical river, flow on
through desert and city ;
Broken or smooth, flow onward into
the Infinite sea.

Who knows what urges thee on, what
dark laws and cosmical forces
Stain thee or keep thee pure, and
bring thee at last to thy goal ?

What is the cause of thy rest or unrest,
of thy foulness or pureness ?

What is the secret of life, or the painful
riddle of death ?

Why is it better to be than to cease, to
flow on than to stagnate ?

Why is the river-stream sweet, while
the sea is as bitter as gall ?

Surely we know not at all, but the
cycle of Being is eternal,
Life is eternal as death, tears are eternal
as joy.

As the stream flowed, it will flow ;
though 'tis sweet, yet the sea
will be bitter :

Foul it with filth, yet the deltas grow
green and the ocean is clear.

Always the sun and the winds will strike
its broad surface and gather

Some purer drops from its depths, to
float in the clouds of the sky ;—

Soon these shall fall once again, and
replenish the full-flowing river.

Roll round then, O mystical cycle !
flow onward, ineffable stream !

A HEATHEN HYMN.

O LORD, the Giver of my days,
My heart is ready, my heart is ready ;
I dare not hold my peace, nor pause,
For I am fain to sing Thy praise.

I praise Thee not, with impious pride,
For that Thy partial hand has given
Bounties of wealth or form or brain,
Good gifts to other men denied.

Nor weary Thee with blind request,
For fancied goods Thy hand withholds ;
I know not what to fear or hope,
Nor aught but that Thy will is best.

Not whence I come, nor whither I go,
Nor wherefore I am here, I know ;
Nor if my life's tale ends on earth,
Or mounts to bliss, or sinks to woe.

Nor know I aught of Thee, O Lord ;
Behind the veil Thy face is hidden :
We faint, and yet Thy face is hidden ;
We cry,—Thou answerest not a word.

But this I know, O Lord, Thou art,
And by Thee I too live and am ;
We stand together, face to face,
Thou the great whole, and I the part.

We stand together, soul to soul,
 Alone amidst Thy waste of worlds ;
 Unchanged, though all creation fade,
 And Thy swift suns forget to roll.

Wherefore, because my life is Thine,
 Because, without Thee I were not ;
 Because, as doth the sea, the sun,
 My nature gives back the Divine.

Because my being with ceaseless flow
 Sets to Thee as the brook to the sea ;
 Turns to Thee, as the flower to the sun,
 And seeks what it may never know.

Because, without me Thou hadst been
 For ever, seated midst Thy suns ;
 Marking the soulless cycles turn,
 Yet wert Thyself unknown, unseen.

I praise Thee, everlasting Lord,
 In life and death, in heaven and hell :
 What care I, since indeed Thou art,
 And I the creature of Thy word.

Only if such a thing may be :
 When all Thy infinite will is done,
 Take back the soul Thy breath has
 given,
 And let me lose myself in Thee.

IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

UNDER the picture gallery wall,
 As a sea-leaf clings to a wave-worn
 rock,
 Nor shrinks from the surging impetu-
 ous shock
 Of the breakers which gather and
 whiten and fall—
 A child's form crouches, nor seems to
 heed

The ceaseless eddy and whirl of men :
 Men and women with hearts that bleed,
 Men and women of wealth and fame,
 High in honour, or sunk in shame,
 Pass on like phantoms, and pass again.
 And he lies there like a weed.

A child's form, said I ; but looking
 again

It is only the form that is childish now,
 For age has furrowed the low dull
 brow,

And marked the pale face with its lines
 of pain.

Yet but few years have fled, since I
 first passed by,

For a dwarf's life is short if you go by
 the sun,

And marked in worn features and lus-
 treless eye

Some trace of youth's radiance, though
 faint and thin,

But now, oh, strange jest ! there's a
 beard to his chin.

And he lies there, grown old ere his
 youth is done,

With his poor limbs bent awry.

What a passer-by sees, is a monstrous
 head,

With a look in the eyes as of those who
 gaze

On some far-off sight with a dumb
 amaze ;

A face as pale as the sheeted dead,
 A frail body propped on a padded
 crutch,

And lean long fingers, which flutter the
 keys

Of an old accordion, returning their
 touch

With some poor faint echoes of popular
 song,

Trivial at all times and obsolete long,
Psalm-tunes, and African melodies,
Not differing very much.

And there he sits nightly in heat and
cold,

When the fountains fall soft on the
stillness of June,

Or when the sharp East sings its own
shrill tune,

Patiently playing and growing old.

The long year waxes and wanes, the
great

Flash by in splendour from rout or ball,
Statesmen grown weary with long
debate,

Hurry by homewards, and fling him
alms ;

Pitiful women, touched by the psalms,
Bringing back innocence, stoop by the
wall

Where he lies at Dives' gate.

What are his thoughts of, stranded
there ?

While life ebbs and flows by, again and
again,

Does the old sad Problem vex his poor
brain ?

" Why is the world so pleasant and
fair,

Why, am I only who did no wrong
Crippled and bent out of human form ?
Why are other men tall and strong ?

Surely if all men were made to rejoice,
Seeing that we come without will or
choice,

It were better to crawl for a day like a
worm,

Than to lie like this so long !

" The blind shuffles by with a tap of
his staff,

The tired tramp plods to the workhouse
ward,—

But he carries his broad back as straight
as a lord

And the blind man can hear his little
ones laugh,

While I lie here like a weed on the
sand,

With these crooked limbs, paining me
night and day.

Is it true, what they tell of a far-off land,
In the sweet old faith which was
preached for the poor,—

Where none shall be weary or pained
any more,

Nor change shall enter nor any decay,
And the stricken down shall stand ? "

And perhaps sometimes when the sky
is clear,

And the stars show like lamps on the
sweet summer night,

Some chance chord struck with a sud-
den delight,

Soars aloft with his soul, and brings
Paradise near.

And then—for even nature is some-
times kind—

He lies stretched under palms with a
harp of gold ;

Or is whirled on by coursers as fleet as
the wind ;

And is no more crippled, nor weak nor
bent ;

No more painful nor impotent ;

No more hungry, nor weary nor cold,—
But of perfect form and mind.

Or maybe his thoughts are of humbler
cast,

For hunger and cold are real indeed ;

And he looks for the hour when his
toil shall be past,

And he with sufficient for next day's
 need :
 Some humble indulgence of food or
 fire,
 Some music-hall ditty, or marvellous
 book,
 Or whatever it be such poor souls
 desire ;
 And with this little solace, for God
 would fain
 Make even his measures of joy and
 pain,
 He drones happily on in his quiet
 nook,
 With hands that never tire.

Well, these random guesses must go
 for nought
 Seeing it is wiser and easier far
 To weigh to an atom the faintest star,
 Than to sound the dim depths of a
 brother's thought.
 But whenever I hear those poor snatches
 of song,
 And see him lie maimed in body and
 soul,
 While I am straight and healthy and
 strong,
 I seem to redden with a secret shame,
 That we should so differ who should be
 the same,
 Till I hear their insolent chariot wheels
 roll
 The millionaires along.

WATCH.

OH, hark ! the languid air is still,
 The fields and woods seem hushed
 and dumb.
 But listen, and you shall hear a thrill,
 An inner voice of silence come,

Stray notes of birds, the hum of bees,
 The brook's light gossip on its way,
 Voices of children heard at play,
 Leaves whispering of a coming breeze.

Oh, look ! the sea is fallen asleep,
 The sail hangs idle evermore ;
 Yet reflux from the outer deep,
 The low wave sobs upon the shore.
 Silent the dark cave ebbs and fills,
 Silent the broad weeds wave and
 sway ;
 Yet yonder fairy fringe of spray
 Is born of surges vast as hills.

Oh, see ! the sky is deadly dark,
 There shines not moon nor any
 star ;
 But gaze awhile, and you shall mark
 Some gleam of glory from afar :
 Some half-hid planet's vagrant ray ;
 Some lightning flash which wakes
 the world ;
 Night's pirate banner slowly furled ;
 And, eastward, some faint flush of day.

DROWNED.

ONLY eighteen winters old !
 Lay her with a tender hand
 On the delicate, ribbed sea-sand :
 Stiff and cold ; ay, stiff and cold.

What she has been, who shall care ?
 Looking on her as she lies
 With those stony, sightless eyes,
 And the sea-weed in her hair.

Think, O mothers ! how the deep
 All the dreary night did rave ;
 Thundering foam and crested wave,
 While your darlings lay asleep.

How she cleft the midnight air ;
 And the idiot surge beneath
 Whirled her sea-ward to her death,
 Angry that she was so fair.

Tossed her, beat her, till no more
 Rage could do, through all the night ;
 Then with morning's ghastly light,
 Flung her down upon the shore.

Mother ! when brief years ago
 You were happy in your child,
 Smiling on her as she smiled,
 Thought you she would perish so ?

Man ! who made her what she is ;
 What, if when you falsely swore
 You would love her more and more,
 You had seen her lie like this.

And, O Infinite Cause ! didst Thou,
 When Thou mad'st this hapless
 child,

Dowered with passions, fierce and
 wild,
 See her lie as she lies now ?

Filled with wild revolt and rage,
 All I feel I may not speak ;
 Fate so strong, and we so weak,
 Like rats in a cage,—like rats in a
 cage.

THE WANDERER.

I REARED my virgin Soul on dainty
 food,
 I fed her with rich fruit and garnered
 gold
 From gardens planted by the pious
 care
 Of the wise dead of old.

The long procession of the fabulous
 Past,
 Rolled by for me—the earliest dawn of
 time ;

The seven great Days ; the garden and
 the sword ;
 The first red stain of crime ;

The fierce rude chiefs who smote, and
 burned, and slew,
 And all for God ; the pitiless tyrants
 grand,
 Who piled to heaven the eternal monu-
 ments,
 Unchanged amid the sand ;

The fairy commonwealths, where Free-
 dom first
 Inspired the ready hand and glowing
 tongue
 To a diviner art and sweeter song
 Than men have feigned or sung ;

The strong bold sway that held man-
 kind in thrall,
 Soldier and jurist marching side by side,
 Till came the sure slow blight, when
 all the world
 Grew sick, and swooned, and died ;

Again the long dark night, when
 Learning dozed
 Safe in her cloister, and the world
 without
 Rang with fierce shouts of war and
 cries of pain,
 Base triumph, baser rout ;

Till rose a second dawn of light again,
 Again the freemen stood in firm array
 Behind the foss, and Pope and Kaiser
 came,
 Wondered and turned away ;

And then the broadening stream, till
 the sleek priest
 Aspired to tread the path the Pagan
 trod,
 And Rome fell once again, and the
 brave North
 Rose from the Church to God.

All these passed by for me, till the
 vast tide
 Grew to a sea too wide for any shore ;
 Then doubt o'erspread me, and a cold
 disgust,
 And I would look no more.

For something said, "The Past is dead
 and gone,
 Let the dead bury their dead, why
 strive with Fate?
 Why seek to feed the children on the
 husks
 Their rude forefathers ate?"

"For even were the Past reflected back
 As in a mirror, in the historic page,
 For us its face is strange, seeing that
 the Race
 Betters from age to age."

"And if, hearing the tale we told our-
 selves,
 We marvel how the monstrous fable
 grew ;
 How in these far-off years shall men
 discern
 The fictive from the true?"

* * * *

Then turned I to the broad domain of
 Art,
 To seek if haply Truth lay hidden there ;
 Well knowing that of old close links
 connect
 The true things and the fair.

Fair forms I found, and rounded limbs
 divine,
 The maiden's grace, the tender curves
 of Youth,
 The majesty of happy perfect years,
 But only half the truth.

For there is more, I thought, in man,
 and higher,
 Than animal graces cunningly com-
 bined ;
 Since oft within the unlovely frame is
 set
 The shining, flawless mind.

So I grew weary of the pallid throng,
 Deep-bosomed maids and stalwart
 heroes tall.
 One type I saw, one earthy animal seal
 Of comeliness in all !

But not the awful, mystical human soul—
 The soul that grovels and aspires in
 turn—
 The soul that struggles outwards into
 light
 Through lips and eyes that burn.

So, from the soulless marbles, white
 and bare
 And cold, too-perfect art, I turned and
 sought
 The canvases, where Christian hands
 have left
 The fruits of holy thought.

Passion I found, and love, and godlike
 pain,
 The swift soul rapt by mingled hopes
 and fears,
 Eyes lit with glorious light from the
 Unseen,
 Or dim with sacred tears.

But everywhere around the living tree
I marked the tangled growths of fable
twine,

And gross material images confuse
The earthly and divine.

I saw the Almighty Ruler of the
worlds,

The one unfailing Source of Light and
Love,

A sullen gray-beard set on rolling
clouds,

Armed with the bolts of Jove.

The Eternal Son, a shapeless new-born
child,

Supine upon His peasant-mother's
knees,

Or else a ghastly victim, crushed and
worn

By physical agonies.

The virgin mother—now a simple girl ;
Or old and blurred with tears, and wan
with sighs ;

And now a goddess, oft-times giving
back

The harlot-model's eyes.

Till faring on what spark of heaven
was there,

Grew pale, then went out quite ; and
in its stead,

Dull copies of dull common life usurped
The empire of the dead.

Or if sometimes, rapt in a sweet sus-
pense,

I knew a passionate yearning thrill my
soul,

As down long aisles from lofty quires
I heard

The solemn music roll ;

Or if at last the long-drawn symphony,
After much weary wandering seemed to
soar

To a finer air, and subtle measures born
On some diviner shore,

I thought how much of poor mechani-
cal skill,

How little fire of heart, or force of
brain,

Was theirs who first devised or now
declared

That magical sweet strain ;

And how the art was partial, not im-
mense,

As Truth is, or as Beauty, but confined
To this our later Europe, not spread

out,
Wide as the width of mind.

* * * *

So then from Art, and all its empty
shows

And outward-seeming truth, I turned
and sought

The secret springs of knowledge which
lie hid

Deep in the wells of thought.

The hoary thinkers of the Past I knew ;
Whose dim vast thoughts, to too great

stature grown,

Flashed round as fitful lightning flashes
round

The black vault of the Unknown.

Who, seeing that things are Many, and
yet are One ;

That all things suffer change, and yet
remain—

That opposite flows from opposite, Life
and Death,

Love, Hatred, Pleasure, Pain—

Raised high upon the mystical throne
 of life
 Some dim abstraction, hopeful to un-
 wind
 The tangled maze of things, by one
 rude guess
 Of an untutored mind.

The sweet Ideal Essences revealed,
 To that high poet-thinker's eyes I
 saw ;
 The archetypes which underset the
 world
 With one broad perfect Law.

The fair fantastic Commonwealth, too
 fair
 For earth, wherein the wise alone bore
 rule—
 So wise that oftentimes the sage himself
 Shows duller than the fool ;

And that white soul, clothed with a
 satyr's form,
 Which shone beneath the laurels day
 by day,
 And, fired with burning faith in God
 and Right,
 Doubted men's doubts away ;

And him who took all knowledge for
 his own,
 And with the same swift logical sword
 laid bare
 The depths of heart and mind, the
 mysteries
 Of earth and sea and air ;

And those on whom the visionary East
 Worked in such sort, that knowledge
 grew to seem
 An ecstasy, a sudden blaze, revealed
 To crown the mystic's dream ;

Till, once again, the old light faded
 out,
 And left no trace of that fair day re-
 main—
 Only a barren method, binding down
 Men's thoughts with such a chain

That knowledge sank self-slain, like
 some stout knight
 Clogged by his harness ; nor could wit
 devise
 Aught but ignoble quibbles, subtly
 mixed
 With dull theologies.

Not long I paused with these ; but
 passed to him
 Who, stripping, like a skilful wrestler,
 cast
 From his strong arms the precious
 deadly web,
 The vesture of the past ;

And looked in Nature's eyes, and, foot
 to foot,
 Stroved with her daily, till the witch at
 length
 Gave up, reluctant, to the questing
 mind
 The secret of her strength.

And then the old fight, fought on
 modern fields,—
 Whether we know by sense or inward
 sight—
 Whether a law within, or use alone,
 Mark out the bounds of right—

All these were mine ; and then the
 ancient doubt,
 Which scarce kept silence as this master
 taught

The undying soul, or that one subtly
 probed
 The process of our thought,

And shuddered at the dreadful innocent
 talk

To the cicada's chirp beneath the
 trees—

Love poised on silver wings, love fallen
 and fouled
 By black iniquities ;

And laughed to scorn their quest of
 cosmic law,
 Saw folly in the Mystic and the Schools,
 And in the Newer Method gleams of
 truth
 Obscured by childish rules ;

Rose to a giant's strength, and always
 cried—

You shall not find the truth here, she
 is gone ;

What glimpse men had, was ages since,
 and these
 Go idly babbling on—

Jangles of opposite creeds, alike un-
 true,

Quaint puzzles, meaningless logoma-
 chies,

Efforts to pierce the infinite core of
 things

With purblind finite eyes.

Go, get you gone to Nature, she is kind
 To reasonable worship ; she alone

Thinks scorn, when humble seekers
 ask for bread,

To offer them a stone.

* * * *

And Nature drew me to her, and
 awhile

Enchained me. Day by day, things
 strange and new

Rose on me ; day by day, I seemed to
 tread

Fresh footsteps of the true.

I laid life's house bare to its inmost
 room

With lens and scalpel, marked the
 simple cell

Which might one day be man or creep-
 ing worm,

For aught that sense could tell,—

Thrust life to its utmost home, a speck
 of gray

No more nor higher, traced the
 wondrous plan,

The wise appliances which seem to
 shape

The dwelling-place of man,—

Nor halted here, but thirsted still to
 know,

And, with half-blinded eyesight, loved
 to pore

On that scarce visible world, born of
 decay

Or stranded on the shore.

Marked how the Mother works with
 earth and gas,

And with what subtle alchemy knows
 to blend

The vast conflicting forces of the world
 To one harmonious end ;

And, nightly gazing on the splendid
 stars,

Essayed in vain with reverent eye to
 trace

The chain of miracles by which men
 learnt

The mysteries of space ;

And toiled awhile with spade and
hammer, to learn
The long long sequences of life, and
those

Unnumbered cycles of forgotten years
Ere life's faint light arose ;

And loved to trace the strange sweet
life of flowers,
And all the scarce suspected links
which span
The gulf betwixt the fungus and the
tree,
And 'twixt the tree and man.

Then suddenly, "What is it that I
know ?

I know the shows and changes, not the
cause ;

I know but long successions, which
usurp
The name and rank of Laws.

"And what if the design I think I
see

Be but a pitiless order, through the
long

Slow wear of chance and suffering
* working out

Salvation for the strong ?

"How else, if scheme there be, can I
explain

The cripple or the blind, the ravening
jaw,

The infinite waste of life, the plague,
the sword,

The evil, thriftless law,

"Or seeming errors of design, or
strange

Complexities of structure, which
suggest

A will which sported with its power,
or worked
Not careful for the best ?"

I could not know the scheme, nor
therefore spend

My soul in painful efforts to conform
With those who lavished life and brain
to trace

The story of a worm ;

Nor yet with those who, prizing over-
much

The unmeaning jargon of their science,
sought

To hide, by arrogance, from God and
man

Their poverty of thought,

And, blind with fact and stupefied by
law,

Lost sight of the Creator, and became
Dull bigots, narrowed to a hopeless
creed,

And priests in all but name.

* * * *

Thus, tired with seeking truth, and not
content

To dwell with those weak souls who
love to feign

Unending problems of the life and love
Which they can ne'er explain ;

Nor those who, parrot-like, are proud
to clothe

In twenty tongues the nothing that they
know ;

Nor those whom barren lines and
numbers blind

To all things else below ;

And half-suspecting, when the poet sang
And drew my soul to his, and round
me cast

Fine cords of fancy, but a sleight of
words,
Part stolen from the past—

I thought, My life lies not with books,
but men !

Surely the nobler part is his who
guides

The State's great ship through hidden
rocks and sands,
Rude winds and popular tides,—

A freeman amongst freemen,—and
contrives,

By years of thought and labour, to
withdraw

Some portion of their load from lives
bent down

By old abusive law !

A noble task ; but how to walk with
those

Who by fate's subtle irony ever hold
The freeman's ear—the cunning fluent
knave,

The dullard big with gold ?

And how, when worthier souls bore
rule, to hold

Faction more dear than Truth, or stoop
to cheat,

With cozening words and shallow
flatteries

The Solons of the street ?

Or, failing this, to wear a hireling
sword—

Ready, whate'er the cause, to kill and
slay,

And float meanwhile, a gilded butter-
fly,

My brief inglorious day—

Or, in the name of Justice, to confuse,
For hire, with shameless tongue and
subtle brain,

Dark riddles, which, to honest minds
unwarped,

Were easy to explain—

Or, with keen salutary knife, to carve
For hire the shrinking limb ; or else to
feign

Wise words and healing powers, though
knowing naught

In face of death and pain—

Or grub all day for pelf 'mid hides and
oils,

Like a mole in some dark alley, to rise
at last,

After dull years, to wealth and ease,
when all

The use for them is past—

Or else to range myself with those who
seek

By reckless throws with chance, by
trick and cheat,

Swift riches lacking all the zest of toil,
And only bitter-sweet.

Or worst, and still for hire, to feign to
hear

A voice which called not, calling me to
tell

Now of an indolent heaven, and now,
obscene

Threats of a bodily hell.

* * *

Then left I all, and ate the husks of sense ;
Oh, passionate coral lips ! oh, shameful
fair !

Bright eyes, and careless smiles, and
reckless mirth !

Oh, golden rippling hair !

Oh, rose-strewn feasts, made glad with
wine and song
And laughter-lit ! oh, whirling dances
sweet,

When the mad music faints awhile and
leaves

Low beats of rhythmic feet !

Oh, glorious terrible moments, when
the sheen

Of silk, and straining limbs flash
thundering by,

And name and fame and honour itself,
await

Worse hazard than the die !

All these were mine. Then, thought I,
I have found

The truth at last ; here comes not doubt
to pain ;

Here things are what they seem, not
figments, born

Of a too busy brain.

But soon, the broken law avenged
itself ;

For, oh, the pity of it ! to feel the fire
Grow colder daily, and the soaring
soul

Sunk deep in grosser mire.

And oh, the pity of it ! to drag down
lives

Which had been happy else, to ruin,
and waste

The precious affluence of love, which
else

Some humble home had graced.

And oh ! the weariness of feasts and
wine ;

The jests where mirth was not, the
nerves unstrung,

The throbbing brain, the tasteless joys,
which keep
Their savour for the young.

These came upon me, and a vague un-
rest,

And then a gnawing pain ; and then I
fled,

As one some great destruction passes,
flees

A city of the dead.

* * * *

Then, pierced by some vague sense of
guilt and pain,

“ God help me ! ” I said. “ There is
no help in life,

Only continual passions waging war,
Cold doubt and endless strife ! ”

But He is full of peace, and truth, and
rest,

I give myself to Him ; I yearn to
find

What words divine have fallen from age
to age

Fresh from the Eternal mind.

And so, upon the reverend page I
dwelt,

Which shows Him formless, self-con-
tained, all-wise,

Passionless, pure, the soul of visible
things,

Unseen by mortal eyes ;

Who oft across dim gulfs of time re-
vealed,

Grew manifest, then passed and left a
foul

Thick mist of secular error to ob-
scure

The upward gazing soul ;

And that which told of Opposite
Principles,
Of Light with Darkness warring ever-
more ;

Ah me ! 'twas nothing new, I had felt
the fight
Within my soul before.

And those wise Answers of the far-off
sage,
So wise, they shut out God, and can
enchain
To-day in narrow bonds of foolishness
The subtle Eastern brain.

And last, the hallowed pages dear to
all,
Which bring God down to earth, a
King to fight
With His people's hosts ; or speaking
awful words
From out the blaze of light,—

Which tell how earthly chiefs who
loved the right,
Were dear to Him ; and how the poet
king
Sang, from his full repentant heart, the
strains
Sad hearts still love to sing.

And how the seer was filled with words
of fire,
And passionate scorn and lofty hate of
Ill,
So pure, that we who hear them seem
to hear
God speaking to us still,

But mixed with these, dark tales of
fraud and blood,
Like weeds in some fair garden ; till I
said,

"These are not His ; how shall a man
discern
The living from the dead ?

"I will go to that fair Life, the flower
of lives ;
I will prove the infinite pity and love
which shine
From each recorded word of Him who
once
Was human, yet Divine.

"Oh, pure sweet life, crowned by a
godlike death ;
Oh, tender healing hand ; oh, words that
give
Rest to the weary, solace to the sad,
And bid the hopeless live !

"Oh, pity, spurning not the penitent
thief ;
Oh, wisdom, stooping to the little
child ;
Oh, infinite purity, taking thought for
lives
By sinful stains defiled !

"With thee, will I dwell, with thee."
But as I mused,
Those pale ascetic words renewed my
doubt :
The cheek, which to the smiter should
be turned,
The offending eye plucked out.

The sweet impossible counsels which
may seem
Too perfect for our need ; nor recog-
nise
A duty to the world, not all reserved
For that beyond the skies.

“And was it truth, or some too reverent
dream
Which scorned God’s precious processes
of birth,
And spurned aside for Him, the
changeless laws
Which rule all things of earth ?

“Or how shall some strange breach of
natural law
Be proof of moral truth ; yet how deny
That He who holds the cords of life and
death
Can raise up those who die ?

“Yet how to doubt that God may be
revealed ;
Is He more strange, incarnate, shedding
tears,
Than when the unaided scheme fulfils
itself
Through countless painful years ?

“But if revealed He be, how to escape
The critic who dissects the sacred page,
Till God’s gift hangs on grammar, and
the saint
Is weaker than the sage !”

These warring thoughts held me, and
more ; but when
The simple life divine shone forth no
more,
And the fair truth came veiled in stately
robes
Of philosophic lore ;

And ’twas the apostle spoke, and not
the Christ ;
The scholar, not the Master ; and the
Church
Defined itself, and sank to earthly
thrones :
“Surely,” I said, “my search

“Is vain ;” and when with magical
rite and spell
They killed the Lord, and sought with
narrow creed,
Half-fancy, half of barbarous logic
born,
To heal the hearts that bleed ;

And heretic strove with heretic, and
the Church
Slew for the truth itself had made :
again,
“Can these things be of Him ?” I
thought, and felt
The old undying pain.

And yet the fierce false prophet turned
to God
The gross idolatrous East ; and far away,
Beyond the horrible wastes, the lewd
knave makes
A Paradise to-day.

* * * *

Yet deep within my being still I kept
Two sacred fires alight through all the
strife,—
Faith in a living God ; faith in a soul
Dowered with an endless life.

And therefore though the world’s
foundations shook,
I was not all unhappy ; knowing well
That He whose hand sustained me
would not bear
To leave my soul in hell.

But now I looked on nature with
strange eyes,
For something whispered, “Surely all
things pass ;
All life decays on earth or air or sea,—
All wither like the grass.”

"These are, then have been, we ourselves decline,
And cease and turn to earth, and are as they :
Shall our dear animals rise ; shall the dead flowers
Bloom in another May ?

"The seed springs like the herb, but not the same ;
And like us, not the same, our children rise ;
The type survives, though suffering gradual change,
The individual dies.

"How shall one seek to sever, e'en in thought,
Body and soul ; how show to doubting eyes
That this returns to dust, while the other soars
Deathless beyond the skies ?

"And if it be a lovely dream—no more,
And life is ended with our latest breath,
May not the same sweet fancy have devised
The Lord of life and death ?

"We know Him not at all, nor may conceive
Beginning or yet ending. Is it more
To image an Eternal World, than one
Where nothing was before ?

"Whence came the Maker ? Was He uncreate ?
Then why must all things else created be ?
Was He created ? Then, the Lord I serve,
Lies farther off than He.

"Or if He be indeed, yet the soul dies.
Why, what is He to us ? not here, not here !

His judgments fall, wrong triumphs here—right sinks ;
What hope have we, or fear ?"

I could not answer, yet when others came,
Affirming He was not, and bade me live
In the present only, seizing unconcerned
What pleasures life could give,

My doubt grown fiercer, scoffed at them, "Oh fools,
And blind, your joys I know ; the universe
Confutes you ; can you see right yield to might,
The better to the worse,—

"Nor burn to adjust them ? If it were a dream,
Would all men dream it ? Can your thought conceive
The end you tell of better than the life,
Which all men else believe ?

"Or if we shrink as from a hateful voice,
From mute analogies of frame and shape,
Surely no other than a breath Divine
Gave reason to the ape."

"What made all men to call on God ? what taught
The soaring soul its lofty heavenward flight ?
What led us to discern the strait bounds set,
To sever wrong from right ?

"Be sure, no easier is it to declare
He is not than He is:" and I who
sought
Firm ground, saw here the same too
credulous faith
And impotence of thought.

And when they brought me their fan-
tastic creed,
With a figment for a god—mock cere-
monies—
Man worshipping himself—mock priests
to kill
The soul's high liberties,—

I spurned the folly with a curse, and
turned
To dwell with my own soul apart, and
there
Found no companion but the old doubt
grown
To an immense despair.

* * * *

Then, as a man who, on a sunny day,
Feeling some trivial ache, unknown be-
fore,
Goes careless from his happy home,
and seeks
A wise physician's door.

And when he comes forth, neither
heeds nor sees
The joyous tide of life or smiling sky,
But always, always hears a ceaseless
voice
Repeating "Thou shalt die."

So all the world flowed by, and all my
days
Passed like an empty vision, and I said,
"There is no help in life; seeming to
live,
We are but as the dead."

And thus, I tossed about long time;
at last
Nature rebelled beneath the constant
pain,
And the dull sleepless care forgot itself,
In frenzy of the brain.

And sometimes all was blackness, un-
relieved,
And sometimes I would wander day
and night,
Through fiery long arcades, which
seared my brain
With flakes of blinding light.

And then I lay unmoved in a gray
calm;
Not life nor death, and the past came
to seem
Thought, act, faith, doubt, things of
but little worth
A dream within a dream.

* * * *

But, when I saw my country like a
cloud,
Sink in the East, and the free ocean-
wind
Fanned life's returning flame and
roused again
Slow pulse and languid mind;

Soon the great rush and mystery of the
sea,
The grisly depths, the great waves
surging on,
Dark with white spuming crests which
threaten death,
Swoop by, and so are gone.

And the strong sense of weakness, as
we sped—
Tossed high, plunged low, through
many a furious night,

And slept in faith, that some poor
seaman woke
To guide our course aright.

All lightened something of my load,
and seemed
To solace me a little, for they taught,
That the impalpable unknown might
stretch,
Even to the realms of thought.

And so I wandered into many lands,
And over many seas ; I felt the chill
Which in mid-ocean strikes on those
who near
The spire-crowned icy hill,

And threaded fairy straits beneath the
palms,
Where, year by year, the tepid waters
sleep ;
And where, round coral isles, the
sudden sea
Sinks its unfathomed deep.

Upon the savage feverish swamp, I trod
The desert sands, the fat low plains of
the East ;
On glorious storied shores and those
where man
Was ever as the beast.

And, day by day, I felt my frozen soul,
Soothed by the healing influence of
change,
Grow softer, registering day by day,
Things new, unknown, and
strange.

Not therefore, holding what it spurned
before,
Nor solving riddles, which before per-
plexed ;

But with new springs of sympathy, no
more
By impotent musings vexed.

* * * *

And last of all I knew the lovely land
Which was most mighty, and is still
most fair ;
Where world-wide rule and heaven-
ward faith have left
Their traces everywhere.

And as from province to province I
wandered on,
City or country, all was fair and sweet ;
The air, the fields, the vines, the dark-
eyed girls,
The dim arcaded street ;

The minsters lit for vespers, in the cool ;
Gay bridal, solemn burials, soaring
chant,
Spent in high naves, gray cross, and
wayside shrine,
And kneeling suppliant ;

And painting, strong to aid the eye of
faith,
And sculpture, figuring awful destinies :
Thin campanili, crowning lake-lit hills,
And sea-worn palaces.

Then, as the sweet days passed me one
by one,
New tides of life through body and
soul were sent ;
And daily sights of beauty worked a
calm
Ineffable content.

And soon, as in the spring, ere frosts
are done,
Deep down in earth the black roots
quicken and start,

I seemed to feel a spring of faith and
love

Stir through my frozen heart.

* * * *

Till one still summer eve, when as I
mused

By a fair lake, from many a silvery bell,
Thrilled from tall towers, I heard the

Angelus,

Deep peace upon me fell.

And following distant organ-swells, I
passed

Within the circuit of a lofty wall,

And thence within dim aisles, wherein
I heard

The low chant rise and fall.

And dark forms knelt upon the ground,
and all

Was gloom, save where some dying
day-beam shone,

High in the roof, or where the votive
lamp

Burned ever dimly on.

Then whether some chance sound or
solemn word

Across my soul a precious influence cast,

Or whether the fair presence of a faith
Born of so great a Past,

Smote me! the wintry glooms were
past and done,

And once again the Spring-time, and
once more

Faith from its root bloomed heaven-
ward—and I sank

Weeping upon the floor.

* * * *

Long time within that peaceful home
I dwelt

With those grave brethren, spending
silent days

And watchful nights, in solemn reverent
thought,

Made glad by frequent praise.

And the awakened longing for the
Truth,

With the great dread of what had been
before,

The ordered life, the nearer view of
heaven,

Worked on me more and more.

So that, I lived their life of prayer and
praise,

Alike in summer heats and wintry
snows,

Pacing chill cloisters 'neath the waning
stars,

Long ere the slow sun rose.

And speaking little, and bringing down
my soul

With frequent fast and vigil, saw at
length

Truth's face show daily clearer and
more clear

To failing bodily strength.

For living in a mystical air, and
parched

With thirst for faith and truth; at last
I brought

The old too-active logic to enforce
The current of my thought.

And wishing to believe, I took for
true

The shameless subtleties which dare to
tell

How the Eternal charged one hand to
hold

The keys of heaven and hell.

"For if a faith be given, then must
there be
A Church to guard it, and a tongue to
speak,
And an unerring mind to rule alike
The strong souls and the weak."

"And, because God's high purpose
stands not still,
But He is ever with His own, the tide
Of miracle and dogma ceases not,
But flows down strong and wide,

"To the world's ending." So my
mind fell prone,
Before the Church; and teachings new
and strange;
The wafer, which to spirit and sense
sustains
Some dim incredible change—

The substance which tho' altered yet
retains
The self-same accidents; the Virgin
Queen,
Immaculate in birth, and without death,
Soaring to worlds unseen—

The legends, sometimes foolish, oft times
fair,
Of saints who set all natural laws at
naught;
The miracles, the portents, not the
charm,
Of the old Pagan thought—

These shook me not at all, who only
longed
To drain the healing draught of faith
again,
And dreaded, with a coward dread, the
thought
Of the old former pain.

The more incredible the tale, the more
The merit of belief; the more I sought
To reason out the truth, I knew the
more
The impotence of thought.

And thus the swift months passed in
prayer and praise,
Bringing the day when those tall gates
should close,
And shut me out from thought and
life and all
Our heritage of woes.

* * * * *
Then, one day, when the end drew
very near,
Which should blot out the past for
ever, and I
Waited impatient, longing for the hour
When my old self should die;

I knelt at noon, within the darkened
aisle,
Before a doll tawdry with rich bro-
cade,
And all ablaze with gems, the precious
gifts
Which pious hands had made:

Nor aught of strange I saw, so changed
was I,
In that dull fetich; nay, heaven's gate
unsealed,
And the veiled angels bent before the
throne,
Where sat their Lord revealed.

While like a flood the ecstasy of faith
Surged high and higher, swift to fall at
last
Lower and lower, when the rapture
failed
And faded, and was past.

Lo, a sweet sunbeam, straying through
the gloom
Smote me, as when the first low shaft
of day

Aslant the night-clouds shoots, and
momently
Chases the mists away.

And that ideal heaven was closed, and
all

That reverend house turned to a dark-
ened room,

A den of magic, masking with close
fumes
The odours of the tomb.

* * * *

Then passed I forth. Again my soul
was free ;

Again the summer sun and exquisite air
Made all things smile ; and life and joy
and love

Beamed on me everywhere.

And over all the earth there went a
stir,

A movement, a renewal. Round the
spring

In the broad village street, the dark-
eyed girls

Were fain to dance and sing

For the glad time. The children
played their play,

Like us who play at life ; light bursts
of song

Came from the fields, and to the village
church

A bridal passed along.

Far on the endless plain, the swift
steam drew

A soft white riband. Down the lazy
flow

Of the broad stream, I marked, round
sylvan bends,
The seaward barges go.

The brown vine-dresser, bent among
his vines,

Ceased sometimes from his toil to hold
on high

His laughing child, while his deep-
bosomed wife

Cheerful sat watching by.

And all the world was glad, and full
of life,

And I grew glad with it, and quickly
came

To see my past life as it was, and
feel

A salutary shame.

For what was it I had wished ? To set
aside

The perfect scheme of things, to live
apart

A sterile life, divorced from light and
love,

Sole, with an empty heart.

And wherefore to fatigue the Eternal
ear

With those incessant hymns of barren
praise ?

Does not a sweeter sound go up to
Him

From well-spent toilsome days,—

And natural life, refined by honest
love,

And sweet unselfish liturgies of home,
Heaven's will, borne onward by
obedient souls,

Careless of what may come ?

What need has He for praise? Forest
and field,
The winds, the seas, the plains, the
mountains, praise
Their Maker, with a grander litany
Than our poor voices raise.

What need has He of them? And
looking back
To those gray walls which late had
shown so fair,
I felt as one who from a dungeon
'scapes
To free unfettered air.

And half distrustful of myself, and full
Of terror of what might be, once more
fled,
With scarce a glance behind, as one
who flees
A city of the dead.

* * * * *
All through that day and night I jour-
neyed on
To the northward. With the dawn a
tender rose
Blushed in mid-heaven, and looking
up, I saw
Far off, the eternal snows.

Then all day higher, higher, from the
plain,
Beyond the tinkling folds, beyond the
fair
Dense, self-sown chestnuts, then the
scented pines,
And then an eager air,

And then the ice-fields and the cloud-
less heavens ;
And ever as I climbed, I seemed to cast
My former self behind, and all the rags
Of that unlovely past :

The doubts, the superstitions, the
regrets,
The awakening ; as the soul which
hears the loud
Archangel summon, rising, casts be-
hind
Corruption and the shroud.

For I was come into a higher land,
And breathed a purer air than in the
past ;
And He who brought me to the dust
of death
Had holpen me at last.

* * * * *
What then? A dream of sojourn 'mid
the hills,
A stir of homeward travel, swift and
brief,
Because the very hurry of the change
Brought somewhat of relief.

A dream of a fair city, the chosen
seat
Of all the pleasures, impotent to stay
The thirsty soul, whose water-springs
were laid
In dear lands far away.

A dream of the old crowds, the smoke,
the din
Of our dear mother, dearer far than
fair ;
The home of lofty souls and busy
brains,
Keener for that thick air.

Then a long interval of patient toil,
Building the gradual framework of my
art,
With eyes which cared no more to seek
the whole,
Fast fixed upon the part.

And mind, which shunned the general,
absorbed

In the particular only, till it saw
What boundless possibilities lie for
men

'Twixt matter and high law !

How that which may be rules, not that
which must ;

And absolute truth revealed, would
serve to blind

The soul's bright eye, and sear with
tongues of flame

The sinews of the mind.

How in the web of life, the thread of
truth

Is woven with error; yet a vesture
fair

Comes from the loom—a precious royal
robe

Fit for a god to wear.

Till at the last, upon the crest of toil
Sat Knowledge, and I gained a newer
truth :

Not the pale queen of old, but a soft
maid,

Filled with a tender ruth.

And, ray by ray, the clear-faced unity
Orbed itself forth, and lo ! the noble
throng

Of patient souls, who sought the truth
in act,

And grew, through silence, strong.

Till prizing union more than dissidence,
And holding dear the race, I came to
prove

A spring of sympathy within, which
swelled

To a deep stream of love.

And Knowledge gave me gold, and
power, and fame,

And honour ; and Love, a clearer,
surer view :

Thus in calm depths I moored my
weary soul

Fast anchored to the True.

* * * *

* * * *

And now the past lies far away, and I
Can scarce recall those vanished days
again ;

No more the old faith stirs me, and no
more

Comes the old barren pain.

For now each day brings its appointed
toil,

And every hour its grateful sum of care ;
And life grows sweeter, and the gracious
world

Shows day by day more fair.

For now I live a two-fold life ; my own
And yet another's ; and another heart
Which beats to mine, makes glad the
lonely world

Where once I lived apart.

And little lives are mine to keep un-
stained,

Strange mystic growths, which day by
day expand,

Like the flowers they are, and set me
in a fair

Perpetual wonderland.

New senses, gradual language, dawning
mind,

And with each day that passes, traced
more strong

On those white tablets, awful characters
That tell of right and wrong.

And what hand wrote them ? One brief
 life declined,
 Went from us, and is not. Ah ! what
 and where
 Is that fair soul ? Surely it somewhere
 blooms
 In purer, brighter air.

What took it hence, and whither ? Can
 I bear
 To think, that I shall turn to a herb, a
 tree,
 A little earth or lime, nor care for these,
 Whatever things may be ?

Or shall the love and pity I feel for
 these
 End here, nor find a higher type or
 task ?
 I am as God to them, bestowing more
 Than they deserve or ask.

And shall I find no Father ? Shall my
 being
 Aspire in vain for ever, and always tend
 To an impossible goal, which none
 shall reach,—
 An aim without an end ?

Or, shall I heed them when they bid
 me take
 No care for aught but what my brain
 may prove ?
 I, through whose inmost depths from
 birth to death,
 Strange heavenward currents
 move ;

Vague whispers, inspirations, memories,
 Sanctities, yearnings, secret question-
 ings,
 And oft amid the fullest blaze of noon,
 The rush of hidden wings ?

Nay ; my soul spurns it ! Less it is to
 know
 Than to have faith : not theirs who cast
 away
 The mind God gave them, eager to adore
 Idols of baser clay.

But theirs, who marking out the bounds
 of mind,
 And where thought rules, content to
 understand,
 Know that beyond its kingdom lies a
 dread
 Immeasurable land.

A land which is, though fainter than a
 cloud,
 Full of sweet hopes and awful destinies :
 A dim land, rising when the eye is clear
 Across the trackless seas.

* * * *

O life ! O death ! O faithful wandering
 soul !
 O riddle of being, too hard to under-
 stand !
 These are Thy dreadful secrets, Lord ;
 and we
 The creatures of Thy hand.

O wells of consciousness, too deep for
 thought,
 These are Thy dwelling, awful Lord
 Divine ;
 Thine are we still, the creatures of Thy
 hand,
 Living and dying, Thine.

THE WEARY RIVER.

THERE is a ceaseless river,
 Which flows down evermore
 Into a wailing ocean,
 A sea without a shore

Broken by laughing ripple,
Foaming with angry swell,
Sweet music as of heaven,
Deep thunder as of hell.

Gay fleets float down upon it,
And sad wrecks, full of pain :
But all alike it hurries
To that unchanging main.

Sometimes 'tis foul and troubled,
And sometimes clear and pure ;
But still the river flows, and still
The dull sea doth endure.

And thus 'twill flow for ever,
Till time shall cease to be :
O weary, weary river,
O bitter, barren sea.

TRUTH IN FALSEHOOD.

YOUR little hand in mine I rest :
The slender fingers, white and long,
Lie in my broad palm, rude and
strong,
Like birdlings in their nest.

Yours, like yourself, so soft and white,
So delicately free from soil ;
Mine sunbrowned, hard with toil
and toil,
And seamed with scars of fight.

Dear love ! sometimes your innocence
Strikes me with sudden chills of fear ;
What if you saw before you, dear,
The secret gulfs of sense ?—

The coarseness, the deceit, the sin,
We know, who 'mid the sordid crowd
Must press, nor midst the tumult loud
Can hear the voice within ?

What if you saw me with the eyes
Of others,—nay, my own,—or heard
The unworthy tale, the biting word,
The sneer that worldlings prize ?

Or knew me as I am indeed,
No hero free from blot or stain,
But a poor soul who drags his chain
With halting feet that bleed,—

Who oft-time slips and falls, content,
Though bruised and weary, faint and
worn,
He toils all night, if with the morn
When life and strength are spent,

He sees some far-off struggling ray,
Dispel the palpable obscure,
And on the eastern hills, the pure
White footprints of the day ?

But you, oh love, can never know
These darkling paths ; for you the
light
Shines always changeless, always
bright,
The self-same tempered glow.

And love with innocence combined
The nunnery of your heart shall
guard,
And faith with eye unfailing ward
The jewel of your mind.

So be it : I would sooner be
Steeped to the lips in lie and cheat,
A very monster of deceit,
Than bare myself to thee.

Nay, rather would I dare to hear
At that great Day from lips of flame,
Blown to all souls my tale of shame,
Than whispered in thine ear.

Strange riddle, to those who never
knew

Of good with evil intertwined
The two-fold self, the links that bind
The false things to the true ;

But to the seeing eye more clear
Than blaze of noonday. So be sure
If such deceit might keep thee
pure,
I'd glory in it, dear.

TWO VOYAGES.

Two ships which meet upon the ocean
waste,

And stay a little while, and interchange
Tidings from two strange lands, which
lie beneath

Each its own heaven and particular
stars,

And fain would tarry ; but the im-
patient surge

Calls, and a cold wind from the setting
sun

Divides them, and they sadly drift apart,
And fade, and sink, and vanish, 'neath
the verge—

One to the breathless plains and
treacherous seas

Smitten by the tyrannous Sun, where
mind alone

Withers amid the bounteous outer-
world,

And prodigal Nature dwarfs and chains
the man—

One to cold rains, rude winds, and
hungry waves

Spilt on the frowning granite, niggard
suns,

And snows and mists which starve the
vine and palm,

But nourish to more glorious growth
the man.

One to the scentless flowers and song-
less birds,

Swift storms and poison stings and
ravening jaws :

One to spring violets and nightingales,
Sleek-coated kine and honest gray-eyed
skies.

One to lie helpless on the stagnant sea,
Or sink in sleep beneath the hurricane :

One to speed on, white-winged, through
summer airs,

Or sow the rocks with ruin—who
shall tell ?

So with two souls which meet on life's
broad deep,

And cling together but may not stay ;
for Time

And Age and chills of Absence wear
the links

Which bind them, and they part for
evermore—

One to the tropic lands of fame and
gold,

And feverish thirst and weariness of
soul ;

One to long struggles and a wintry life,
Decked with one sweet white bloom of
happy love.

For each, one fate, to live and die
apart,

Save for some passing smile of kindred
souls ;

Then drift away alone, on opposite
tides,

To one dark harbour and invisible goal.

THE WISE RULE.

"TIME flies too fast, too fast our life
decays."

Ah, faithless ! in the present lies our
being ;

And not in lingering love for vanished
days !

"Come, happy future, when my soul
shall live."

Ah, fool ! thy life is now, and not
again ;

The future holds not joy nor pain to
give !

"Live for what is : future and past are
naught."

Ah, blind ! a flash, and what shall
be, has been.

Where, then, is that for which thou
takest thought ?

Not in what has been, is, or is to be,
The wise soul lives, but in a wider
time,

Which is not any, but contains the
three !

THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING.

"CRY, cry aloud in the land, cry aloud
in the streets of the city ;

Cry and proclaim that no more shall
the blood of the people be shed.
Too long have the great ones waxed
strong, without justice or any
pity,

Too long have they ground down the
poor, and eaten the people as
bread."

Thus said the voice from the dead.

"Terrible voice, I said, immoderate,
voice of unreason,

Not of themselves do the lowly ones
mourn, or the great ones rejoice ;

He who hath made them unequal,
hath made all things in their
season ;

If they are mighty and strong, they
were made without freedom or
choice."

"Cry, cry aloud," said the voice.

"How shall the sins of the few be
reckoned against the many ?

Are there no tender hearts and kind
'midst the selfish and proud ;

Merciful souls and pure, full of love for
their suffering brothers ;

Pitiful, touched with compassion and
care for the desolate crowd ? "

"Cry," said the voice, "cry aloud."

"Nay, but the world is ruled by merci-
less rules unbending ;

The feeble folk fade from the earth,
and only the mighty remain ;

Not men alone, but all things send
upwards a clamour unending ;

Always the whole creation travails in
sorrow and pain. '

"Cry, ' said the voice, "cry again."

"Are not our sins and our fathers'
worked out in our children's
sorrow ?

Does not excess of laughter sink at its
close in a sigh ?

Mirth and enjoyment to-day turn to
pain and repentance to-morrow ;

Thousands are born every hour, in the
place of the thousands who die."

"Cry," said the stubborn voice,
"cry."

“Lo! He hath made all things ; good
and evil, sorrow and pleasure ;
Not as your ways are His ways, yet are
ye not all in His hand ?
Just is He, though ye know not the
measure wherewith He will
measure ;
Dark things shall one day be clear ;
to obey is to understand ! ”
Thus that voice, solemn and grand.

OTHER DAYS.

O THRUSH, your song is passing sweet,
But never a song that you have sung
Is half so sweet as thrushes sang
When my dear love and I were young.

O Roses, you are sweet and red,
Yet not so red nor sweet as were
The roses that my mistress loved
To bind within her flowing hair.

Time filches fragrance from the flower ;
Time steals the sweetness from the
song ;
Love only scorns the tyrant's power,
And with the growing years grows
strong.

THE TRUE MAN.

TAKE thou no thought for aught save
right and truth,
Life holds for finer souls no equal prize ;
Honours and wealth are baubles to the
wise,
And pleasure flies on swifter wing than
youth.

If in thy heart thou bearest seeds of
hell,
Though all men smile, yet what shall
be thy gain ?
Though all men frown, if truth and
right remain,
Take thou no thought for aught ; for it
is well.

Take thou no thought for aught ; nor
deem it shame
To lag behind while knaves and dullards
rise ;
Thy soul asks higher 'guerdon, purer
fame,
Than to loom large and grand in vulgar
eyes.
Though thou shouldst live thy life in
vile estate,
Silent, yet knowing that deep within
thy breast
Unkindled sparks of genius lie re-
pressed,—
Greater is he who is, than seemeth,
great.

If thou shouldst spend long years of
hope deferred,
Chilled through with doubt, and sickening
to despair ;
If as cares thicken friends grow cold
and rare,
Nor favouring voice in all the throng
be heard ;
If all men praise him whom thou
know'st to be
Of lower aims and duller brain than
thine,—
Take thou no thought, though all men
else combine
In thy despite : their praise is naught
to thee.

Bethink thee of the irony of fate,
How great men die inglorious and
alone ;

How Dives sits within upon his throne,
While good men crouch with Lazarus
at the gate.

Our tree of life set on Time's hither
shore

Blooms like the secular aloe once an
age :

The great names scattered on the
historic page

Are few indeed, but the unknown are
more.

Waste is the rule of life: the gay
flowers spring,

The fat fruits drop, upon the untrodden
plain ;

Sea-sands at ebb are silvered o'er with
pain ;

The fierce rain beats and mars the
feeble wing ;

Fair forms grow fairer still for deep
disease ;

Hearts made to bless are spent apart,
alone.

What claim hast thou to joy, while
others moan ?

God made us all, and art thou more
than these ?

Take thou no care for aught save truth
and right ;

Content, if such thy fate, to die obscure ;
Wealth palls and honours, Fame may
not endure,

And loftier souls soon weary of delight.
Keep innocence ; be all a true man
ought ;

Let neither pleasure tempt, nor pains
appal :

Who hath this, he hath all things,
having naught ;

Who hath it not, hath nothing, having
all.

PASSING.

To spring, to bloom, to fade,—
This is the sum of the laborious years ;
Life preludes death as laughter ends in
tears :

All things that God has made
Suffer perpetual change, and may not
long endure.

We alter day by day ;
Each little moment, as life's current
rolls,

Stamps some faint impress on our
yielding souls ;

We may not rest nor stay,
Drifting on tides unseen to one dread
goal and sure.

Our being is compassed round
With miracles ; on this our life-long
sleep,

Strange whispers rise from the sur-
rounding deep,

Like that weird ocean sound
Borne in still summer nights on weary
watching ears.

The selves we leave behind
Affright us like the ghosts of friends
long dead ;

The old love vanished in the present
dread,

They visit us to find
New sorrows, alien hopes, strange
pleasures, other fears.

FETTERS.

OH who shall say that we are free !
 Surely life's chains are strong to bind
 From youth to age, from birth to death,
 Body and mind.

We run the riotous race of youth,
 Then turn from evil things to good :
 'Tis but a slower pulse, a chill
 Of youth's hot blood.

We mount the difficult steep of thought,
 Or pace the dusty paths of gain :
 'Tis but that sense receding leaves
 A keener brain.

Time takes this too, and then we turn
 Our dim eyes to the hidden shore ;
 Life palls, and yet we long to live,—
 Ay, nothing more.

RICH AND WISE.

WILD flowers in spring were sweet to
 childish hands
 As riches to the wretch possessing
 naught ;

And as the water-springs in desert
 lands

Are the pale victories of patient
 thought :

But sweeter, dearest, sweeter far,
 The hours when we together are.

No more I know the childish joys of
 old,

Nor yet have learnt the grave delights
 of age :

A miser, gloat I on thy locks' rich
 gold ;

A student, ponder on thy soul's fair
 page.

Thus do I grow both rich and wise,
 On these fair locks and those deep
 eyes.

Therefore in wit and wealth do I in-
 crease,

Poring on thee, as on a fair writ
 book ;

No panic-fear can make that rich stream
 cease,

Nor doubt confuse the crystal of thy
 look.

Some to the mart, some to the oratory,
 May turn them : thou art both to me.

LOVE IN DEATH.

DEAR heart ! what a little time it is since Francis and I used to walk
 From church in the still June evenings together, busy with loving talk ;
 And now he is gone, far away over seas, to some strange foreign country,—and I
 Shall never rise from my bed any more, till the day when I come to die.

I tried not to think of him during the prayers ; but when his dear voice I heard,
 I failed to take part in the hymn ; for my heart fluttered up to my throat like a
 bird,

And scarcely a word of the sermon I caught. I doubt 'twas a grievous sin ;
 But 'twas only one poor little hour in the week that I had to be happy in.

When the blessing was given, and we left the dim aisles for the light of the even-
ing star ;

Though I durst not lift up my eyes from the ground, yet I knew that he was not
far.

And I hurried on, though I fain would have stayed, till I heard his footstep draw
near ;

And love rising up in my breast like a flame, cast out every shadow of fear.

Ah me ! 'twas a pleasant pathway home,—a pleasant pathway and sweet ;
Ankle deep through the purple clover ; breast high 'mid the blossoming wheat ;
I can hear the landrails prate through the dew, and the night-jars' tremulous
thrill,

And the nightingale pouring her passionate song from the hawthorn under the
hill.

One day, when we came to the wicket gate, 'neath the elms, where we used to
part,

His voice began to falter and break as he told me I had his heart.

And I whispered back that mine was his : we knew what we felt long ago ;

Six weeks are as long as a lifetime almost, when you love each other so.

So we put up the banns, and were man and wife, in the sweet fading time of the
year,

And till Christmas was over and past, I knew no shadow of sorrow or fear.

It seems like a dream already, alas ! a sweet dream vanished and gone,

So hurried and brief while passing away, so long to look back upon.

I had only had him three little months, and the world lay frozen and dead,
When the summons came, which we feared and hoped, and he sailed over seas
for our bread.

Ah, well ! it is fine to be wealthy and grand, and never to need to part ;

But 'tis better far to love and be poor than be rich with an empty heart.

Though I thought 'twould have killed me to lose him at first, yet was he not
going for me ?

So I hid deep down in my breast all the grief, which I knew it would pain him
to see.

He'd surely be back by the autumn, he said ; and since his last passionate kiss

He has scarcely been out of my thoughts, day or night, for a moment, from that
day to this.

When I wrote to him how I thought it would be, and he answered so full of
love,

Ah ! there was not an angel happier than I, in all the white chorus above.

And I seemed to be lonely no longer, the days and the weeks passed so swiftly away ;

And the March winds died, and the sweet April showers gave place to the blossoms of May.

And then came the sad summer eve, when I sat with the little frock in the sun,
And Patience ran in with the news of the ship—Ah, v'ell ! may His will be done.

They said that all hands were lost, and I swooned away on the floor like a stone ;

And another life came, ere I knew he was safe, and my own was over and gone.

* * * * *

And now I lie helpless here, and shall never rise up again ;

I grow weaker and weaker, day by day, till my weakness itself is a pain.

Every morning the slow dawn creeps ; every evening I see from my bed

The orange-gold fade into lifeless gray, and the old evening star overhead.

Sometimes by the twilight dim, or the awful birth of the day,

As I lie, very still, not asleep nor awake, my soul seems to flutter away ;

And I float far beyond the stars, till I thrill with a rapturous pain,

And the feeble touch of a tiny hand recalls me to life again.

And the doctor says she will live. Ah ! 'tis hard to leave her alone,

And to think she will never know, in the world, the love of the mother who's gone.

They will tell her of me, by-and-by, and perhaps she will shed me a tear ;

But if I should stoop to her bed in the night, she would start with a horrible fear.

She will grow into girlhood, I trust, and will bask in the light of love,

And I, if I gain to see her at all, shall only look on from above.

I shall see her and cannot aid, though she fall into evil and woe.

Ah, how can the angels find heart to rejoice, when they think of their dear ones below ?

And Francis, he too will forget me, and go on the journey of life ;

And I hope, though I dare not think of it yet, will take him another wife—

It will hardly be Patience, I think, though she liked him in days gone by.

Was that why she came ? But what thoughts are these for one who is soon to die ?

I hope he will come ere I go, though I feel no longer the thirst

For the sound of his voice and the light of his eye, which I used to feel at first.

'Tis not that I care for him less, but death dries, with a finger of fire,
The tender springs of innocent love and the torrents of strong desire.

And I know we shall meet again. I have done many things that are wrong,
But surely the Lord of Life and of Love cannot bear to be angry long.
I am only a girl of eighteen, and have had no teacher but love ;
And, it may be, the sorrow and pain I have known will be counted for me
above.

For I doubt if the minister knows all the depths of the goodness of God,
When he says, He is jealous of earthly love, and bids me bow down 'neath the
rod.

He is learnèd and wise, I know, but somehow to dying eyes
God opens the secret doors of the shrine that are closed to the learnèd and wise.

So now I am ready to go, for I know He will do what is best,
Though He call me away while the sun is on high, like a child sent early to rest.
I should like him to see her first, though the yearning is over and past :
But what is that footstep upon the stair? Oh, my darling at last, at last !

DEAR LITTLE HAND.

DEAR little hand that clasps my own,
Embrowned with toil and seamed
with strife ;
Pink little fingers not yet grown
To the poor strength of after-life,—
Dear little hand !

Dear little eyes which smile on mine
With the first peep of morning light ;
Now April-wet with tears, or fine
With dews of pity, or laughing
bright.
Dear little eyes !

Dear little voice, whose broken speech
Ail eloquent utterance can transcend ;
Sweet childish wisdom strong to reach
A holier deep than love or friend :
Dear little voice !

Dear little life ! my care to keep
From every spot and stain of sin ;
Sweet soul foredoomed, for joy or pain,
To struggle and—which? to fail or
win?
Dread mystical life !

STILL WATERS.

A CRUEL little stream I know,
Which slowly, slowly crawls between
The ooze banks, fringed with sedges
green,
That serve to bind its feeble flow.

So sheltered that no passing breath
Of west-wind stirs it ; nay, the blast
Which strips the tall elms and is
past,
Scarce wakes to life its face of death.

On its black surface year by year
 The marsh flowers, grown untimely
 old,
 Shed their soft petals like a tear,
 And hopeless drown their faded
 gold.

Deep in its darkling depths the pike
 Darts with his cruel jaws ; by night
 The black eels, sinuous, serpent-like,
 Twist like fell ghosts that fear the
 light.

Spring shuns it, summer loves it not ;
 The low fat fields are lit with bloom,
 But here the watery sedges rot,
 And all the months are clothed with
 gloom.

Autumn's first footstep sears to brown
 Its coarse green fringe ; the first cold
 breath,
 Ere yet the oak-leaf flutters down,
 Binds its dull life in icy death.

I hate, I hate you, crawling stream !
 Dumb, creeping, murderous wretch,
 I long
 To see the sunlit ripples gleam,
 To hear the torrent's jubilant song.

But you, dull monster, all the years
 Lie rolling on your sullen flood,
 And take your fill of mortal tears ;
 Yet, like the Churchmen, spill not
 blood.

The dark gap in the ice, the boat
 Keel upward, or the drifting oar ;
 Or, like of old, the little coat,
 The white clothes heaped upon the
 shore ;

And some young life is over and
 gone,
 And some fond heart is broken in
 twain ;
 And you flow smoothly, smoothly on,
 Taking no heed for death or pain.

They come and grapple with hooks
 until
 They reach the slimy deep, where
 lies
 The white thing, very cold and still,
 With death's gaze in its stony eyes.

And you just make a ripple, and then
 Flow smoothly onward : you who
 slew
 Young innocent lives of painted men,
 Long ere the crowded city grew ;

And shall in far years yet to be,
 Pierce unborn mothers with that
 sharp pain,
 Which only a mother feels when he
 Who was her first-born comes again,

A clay-cold heap. I would that I
 Had but the archangel's flaming
 brand ;
 So would I burn thy dull springs dry,
 And choke thy flow with hills of
 sand.

Yet why ? Whatever soft souls prate,
 Babbling of universal good,
 Love is the sister-child of hate,
 And all good things are bought with
 blood.

Virtue were not if vice were not,
 Nor darkness if there were not light.
 Creep on ; fulfil thy murderous lot ;
 For Wrong has equal life with Right.

IN REGENT STREET.

ONE of the nightly hundreds who
pass

Wearily, hopelessly, under the gas.

But the old sad words had a strange
new tone,

And the wild laugh seemed to sink to
a moan.

So that turning as one constrained to
look,

The strange sight stifled the voice of
rebuke :

For I looked on a girl's face pure and
fair,

Blue-eyed, and crowned with a glory
of hair,

Such as my dead child-sister might
own,

Were she not a child still, but a
woman grown ;

Full of the tender graces that come
To the cherished light of an ancient
home ;

Even to that touch of a high disdain,
Which is born of a name without blot
or stain.

Strange ; as if one should chance to
meet

An angel of light in that sordid street !

"O child, what misery brings you
here,

To this place of vileness and weeping
and fear ?"

"I am no more than the rest," she
said,

Proudly averting her beautiful head !

Then no response, till some kinder
word

Stole in unawares, and her heart was
stirred.

"I was a wife but the other day,
Now I am left without hope or stay !

"Work did I ask? What work is for
you?

What work can those delicate fingers
do?

"Service? But how could I bear to
part

From the child with whom I had left
my heart?

"Alms?—Yes, at first ; then a pitiless
No :

The State would provide me whither
to go.

"But in sordid prisons it laid my head
With the thief and the harlot ; there-
fore I fled.

"One thing alone had I left untried,
Then I put off the last rag of pride."

"What came? 'You were of an hon-
oured race,

Now you must live with your own
disgrace.'

"But many will buy where few will
give,

And I die every day that my child may
live."

Motherly love sunk to this ! Ah, well,
Teach they not how He went down into
hell :

Only blind me in heart and brain,
Or ever I look on the like again.

FROM THE DESERT.

THOU hast visited me with Thy storms,
And the vials of Thy sore displeasure
Thou hast poured on my head, like a
bitter draught

Poured forth without stint or measure ;
Thou hast bruised me as flax is bruised ;
Made me clay in the potter's wheel ;
Thou hast hardened Thy face like steel,
And cast down my soul to the ground ;
Burnt my life in the furnace of fire,
like dross,

And left me in prison where souls are
bound :

Yet my gain is more than my loss.

What if Thou hadst led my soul
To the pastures where dull souls feed ;
And set my steps in smooth paths, far
away

From the feet of those that bleed ;
Penned me in low, fat plains,
Where the air is as still as death,
And Thy great winds are sunk to a
breath,

And Thy torrents a crawling stream,
And the thick steam of wealth goes up
day and night,
Till Thy sun gives a veiled light,
And heaven shows like a vanished
dream !

What if Thou hadst set my feet
With the rich in a gilded room ;

And made me to sit where the scorners
sit,

Scoffing at death and doom !

What if I had hardened my heart

With dark counsels line upon line ;

And blunted my soul with meat and
wine,

Till my ears had grown deaf to the
bitter cry

Of the halt and the weak and the
impotent ;

Nor hearkened, lapt in a dull content,
To the groanings of those who die !

My being had waxed dull and dead

With the lusts of a gross desire ;

But now Thou hast purged me thoroughly,
and burnt

My shame with a living fire.

So burn me, and purge my will

Till no vestige of self remain,

And I stand out white without spot or
stain.

Then let Thy flaming angel at last

Smite from me all that has been before ;

And sink me, freed from the load of
the past,

In Thy dark depths evermore.

DUMB.

ALL men are poets if they might but
tell

The dim ineffable changes which the
sight

Of natural beauty works on them : the
charm

Of those first days of Spring, when life
revives

And all the world is bloom : the white-
fringed green

Of summer seas swirling around the base

Of overhanging cliffs ; the golden
gleam
Seen from some breezy hill, where far
and wide
The fields grow ripe for harvest ; or the
storm
Smiting the leaden surf, or echoing
On nightly lakes and unsuspected hills,
Revealed in lurid light ; or first per-
ceived,
High in mid-heaven, above the rosy
clouds,
The everlasting snows.

And Art can move,
To higher minds, an influence as great
As Nature's self ; when the rapt gazer
marks
The stainless mother folding arms
divine
Around the Eternal Child, or pitying
love
Nailed to the dreadful cross, or the
white strength
Of happy heathen gods, or serpent
coils
Binding the agonized limbs, till from
their pain
Is born a thing of beauty for all time.

And more than Nature, more than Art
can move
The awakened soul—heroic soaring
deeds ;
When the young champion falls in
hopeless fight,
Striking for home ; or when, by truth
constrained,
The martyr goes forth cheerful to his
fate—
The dungeon, or the torture, or, more
hard,
The averted gaze of friends, the loss of
love,

The loneliness of soul, which truth too
oft
Gives to reward the faith which casts
aside
All things for her ; or saintly lives
obscure,
Spent in a sweet compassion, till they
gain,
Living, some glow of heaven ; or pas-
sionate love,
Bathing our poor world in a mystic
light,
Seen once, then lost for ever. These
can stir
Life to its depths, till silence grows a
load
Too hard to bear, and the rapt soul
would fain
Speak with strange tongues which
startle as they come,
Like the old saints who spake at
Pentecost.

But we are dumb, we are dumb, and
may not tell
What stirs within us, though the soul
may throb
And tremble with its passion, though
the heart
Dissolve in weeping : dumb. Nature
may spread
Sublimest sights of beauty ; Art in-
spire
High thoughts and pure of God-like
sacrifice ;
Yet no word comes. Heroic daring
deeds
Thrill us, yet no word comes ; we are
dumb, we are dumb,
Save that from finer souls at times may
rise,
Once in an age, faint inarticulate
sounds,

Low halting tones of wonder, such as
 come
 From children looking on the stars, but
 still
 With power to open to the listening
 ear
 The Fair Divine Unknown, and to
 unseal
 Heaven's inner gates before us ever-
 more.

Ah, few and far between! The earth
 grows green,
 Art's glorious message speaks from year
 to year,
 Great deeds and high are done from
 day to day,
 But the voice comes not which has
 power to wake
 The sleeping soul within, and animate
 The beauty which informs them, lend-
 ing speech
 To what before was dumb. They
 come, they go,
 Those sweet impressions spent on sepa-
 rate souls,
 Like raindrops on the endless ocean-
 plains,
 Lost as they fall. The world rolls on;
 lives spring,
 Blossom, and fade; the play of life is
 played
 More vivid than of old—a wider stage,
 With more consummate actors; yet
 the dull,
 Cold deeps of sullen silence swallow up
 The strain, and it is lost. But if we
 might
 Paint all things as they are, find voice
 to speak
 The thoughts now mute within us, let
 the soul
 Trace on its sensitive surface vividly,

As does the sun our features, all the
 play
 Of passion, all the changeable tides of
 thought,
 The mystery, the beauty, the delight,
 The fear, the horror, of our lives,—our
 being
 Would blaze up heavenward in a sud-
 den flame,
 Spend itself, and be lost.

Wherefore 'tis well
 This narrow boundary that hedges in
 The strong and weak alike. Thought
 could not live,
 Nor speech, in that pure æther which
 girds round
 Life's central dwelling-place. Only
 the dull
 And grosser atmosphere of earth it is
 Which vibrates to the sweet birds' song,
 and brings
 Heaven to the wondering ear. Only
 the stress,
 The pain, the hope, the longing, the
 constraint
 Of limited faculties circling round and
 round
 The grim circumference, and finding
 naught
 Of outlet to the dread unknown be-
 yond,
 Can lend the poet voice. Only the
 weight,
 The dullness of our senses, which makes
 dumb
 And hushes half the finer utterance,
 Makes possible the song, and modulates
 The too exalted music, that it falls
 So soft upon the listening soul, that
 life,
 Not withered by the awful harmony,
 Nor drunk with too much sweetness,
 nor struck blind

By the too vivid presence of the
 Unknown,
 Fulfils its round of duty—elevated,
 Not slain by too much splendour—
 comforted,
 Not thunder-smitten—soothed, not laid
 asleep—
 And ever, through the devious maze of
 being,
 Fares in slow narrowing cycles to the
 end.

FAITH WITHOUT SIGHT.

No angel comes to us to tell
 Glad news of our beloved dead ;
 Nor at the old familiar board,
 They sit among us, breaking bread.

Three days we wait before the tomb,
 Nay, life-long years ; and yet no
 more,
 For all our passionate tears, we find
 The stone rolled backward from the
 door.

Yet are they risen as He is risen ;
 For no eternal loss we grieve.
 Blessed are they who ask no sign,
 And, never having seen, believe.

CAGED.

ALAS for fame ! I saw a genius sit,
 Draining full bumpers with a trem-
 bling hand,
 And roll out rhapsodies of folly, lit
 By soaring fancies hard to under-
 stand.

Lonely he seemed, whom all men
 should admire ;
 And some were there who sneered a
 covert sneer,
 Quenching with logic cold the sacred
 fire ;
 And one who hardly checked a rising
 tear

Because life's order binds with chains
 of steel
 The struggling individual soul ;
 because
 The fair fine flower of life doth oft
 conceal
 A hidden worm which always frets
 and gnaws
 The inner heart from which all perfumes
 come,
 And round the deep-set core of
 golden fire
 Foul creeping creatures make their
 constant home—
 Black hatred, wild revolt, and gross
 desire.

What is this bar that Nature loves to
 place
 Before the too aspiring heart and
 brain,—
 Bringing down goodly hopes to deep
 disgrace,
 Keeping high pleasure balanced by
 low pain,
 Pure thoughts by secret failings, subtler
 joys
 With grosser sense or hopeless depths
 of woe,—
 Setting our lives in barren counter-
 poise,
 Which says, Thus far, no further
 shalt thou go.

Is it that Nature, envious of her own,
 Even as the fabled gods of primal
 years,
 Because to too great stature it is
 grown,
 Hates her consummate work, and
 inly fears
 Lest the soul, once enfranchised, soar
 too high,
 Up to some Spiritual place of Souls,
 Where the world's feeble echoes faint
 and die,
 And in fine waves a purer æther
 rolls?

There is no infinite in Nature. All
 Is finite, set within a self-made
 bound.

Thought builds round space itself a
 brazen wall,
 And hates the barren cycle's endless
 round.

Life grown too perfect is not life at all ;
 Some hidden discords sweeten every
 strain ;

No virtue is, where is no power to fall,
 Nor true delight without a touch of
 pain.

And this it is that limits evermore
 The life of man to this its low estate,
 And gives the soul's light pinions power
 to soar

Only a little space toward heaven's
 gate.

Creatures we are of the earth, and not
 the sky,

Bound down, constrained, confined ;
 and yet 'tis well :

No angel's wings are ours to mount on
 high,

No chains have power to keep our
 souls in hell.

And since to realms of thought we may
 aspire,

Higher than these in which we
 breathe and are,

And know within the same creative
 fire

As that which lights and warms the
 furthest star,

So should our restless spirits grow con-
 tent

With what is theirs, nor covet to be
 'free ;

Since boundless power is oft most im-
 potent,

And narrow bonds the truest liberty.

TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE.

OH, if we had but eyes to see
 The glory which around us lies,
 To read the secrets of the earth,
 And know the splendours of the
 skies ;

And if we had but ears to hear
 The psalm of life which upward rolls
 From desert tent and city street,
 From every meeting-place of souls ;

And if we had but tongues to tell
 The dumb thoughts that shall ne'er
 be heard,

The inarticulate prayers which rise
 From hearts by passionate yearnings
 stirred,—

Our souls would parch, like Semele's,
 When her dread Lord blazed forth
 confessed.

Ah, sometimes too much knowledge
 blights,

And ignorance indeed is blest !

ON A FLIGHT OF LADY-BIRDS.

OVER the summer sea,
 Floating on delicate wings,
 Comes an unnumbered host
 Of beautiful fragile things ;
 Whence they have come, or what
 Blind impulse has forced them
 here,
 What still voice marshalled them out
 Over wide seas without fear,
 You cannot tell, nor I.

But to-day the air is thick
 With these strangers from far
 away :
 On hot piers and drifting ships
 The weary travellers stay.
 On the sands where to-night they
 will drown,
 On the busy waterside street,
 Trampled in myriads down
 By the careless wayfarers' feet
 The beautiful creatures lie.

Who knows what myriads have sunk
 To drown in the oily waves,
 Till all our sea-side world shows
 Like a graveyard crowded with
 graves ?
 Humble creatures and small,
 How shall the Will which sways
 This enormous unresting ball,
 Through endless cycles of days,
 Take thought for them or care ?

And yet, if the greatest of kings,
 With the wisest of sages com-
 bined,
 Never could both devise—
 Strong arm and inventive mind—

So wondrous a shining coat,
 Such delicate wings and free,
 As have these small creatures which
 float
 Over the breathless sea
 On this summer morning so fair.

* * * * *
 And the life, the wonderful life,
 Which not all the wisdom of earth
 Can give to the humblest creature
 that moves
 The mystical process of birth—
 The nameless principle which doth
 lurk
 Far away beyond atom, or monad,
 or cell,
 And is truly His own most marvel-
 lous work—
 Was it good to give it, or, given,
 well
 To squander it thus away ?

For surely a man might think
 So precious a gift and grand—
 God's essence in part—should be
 meted out
 With a thrifty and grudging hand.
 And hard by, on the yellowing
 corn,
 Myriads of tiny jaws
 Are bringing the husbandman's
 labour to scorn,
 And the cankerworm frets and
 gnaws,
 Which was made for these for a
 prey.

For a prey for these ? but, oh !
 Who shall read us the riddle of
 life—
 The prodigal waste, which naught
 can redress
 But a cycle of sorrow and strife,

The continual sequence of pain,
 The perpetual triumph of wrong,
 The whole creation in travail to make
 A victory for the strong,
 And not with frail insects alone?

For is not the scheme worked out
 Among us who are raised so high?
 Are there no wasted minds among
 men—
 No hearts that aspire and sigh
 For the hopes which the years steal
 away,
 For the labour they love, and its
 meed of fame,
 And feel the bright blade grow rusted
 within,
 Or are born to inherited shame,
 And a portion with those that groan?

How are we fettered and caged
 Within our dark prison-house
 here!
 We are made to look for a loving
 plan;
 We find everywhere sorrow and
 fear.
 We look for the triumph of Good;
 And, from all the wide world
 around,
 The lives that are spent cry upward
 to heaven,
 From the slaughter-house of the
 ground,
 Till we feel that Evil is lord.

And yet are we bound to believe,
 Because all our nature is so,
 In a Ruler touched by an infinite
 ruth
 For all His creatures below.
 Bound, though a mocking fiend
 point

To the waste, and ruin, and
 pain—
 Bound, though our souls should be
 bowed in despair—
 Bound, though wrong triumph
 again and again,
 And we cannot answer a word.

ON AN OLD MINSTER.

OLD minster, when my years were few,
 And life seemed endless to the boy;
 Clear yet and vivid is the joy
 With which I gazed and thought on
 you.

Thin shaft and flower-wrought capital,
 High-springing arch, and blazoned
 pane,
 Quaint gurgoyles stretching heads
 profane,
 And stately throne and carven stall.

The long nave lost in vaporous gray,
 The mailed recumbent forms which
 wait,
 In mockery of earthly state,
 The coming of the dreadful day.

The haunted aisles, the gathering
 gloom,
 By some stray shaft of eve made
 fair:
 The stillness of the mouldering air,
 The faded legends of the tomb.

I loved them all. What care had I,—
 I, the young heir of all the Past,—
 That neither youth nor life might
 last,
 That all things living came to die!

The Past was spent, the Past was done,
 The Present was my own to hold ;
 Far off within a haze of gold
 Stretched the fair Future, scarce begun.

For me did pious builders rear
 Those reverend walls ; for me the
 song
 Of supplication, ages long,
 Had gone up daily, year by year.

And thus I loved you ; but to-day
 The long Past near and nearer shows ;
 Less bright, more clear, the Future
 grows,
 And all the world is growing gray.

But you scarce bear a deeper trace
 Of time upon your solemn brow ;
 No sadder, stiller, grayer now,
 Than when I loved your reverend face.

And you shall be when I am not ;
 And you shall be a thing of joy
 To many a frank and careless boy
 When I and mine are long forgot.

Grave priests shall here with holy rage,
 Whose grandsires are as yet unborn,
 Lash, with fierce words of saintly
 scorn,
 The heats of youth, the greed of age.

Proud prelates sit on that high throne,
 Whose young forefathers drive the
 plough
 While Norman lineage nods below,
 In aged tramp or withered crone.

And white-haired traders feign to pray,
 Sunk deep in thoughts of gain and
 gold ;
 And sweet flower-faces growing old,
 Give place to fresher blooms than they.

With such new shape of creed and
 rite
 As none now living may foretell ;
 A faith of love which needs not
 hell,
 A stainless worship, pure and white.

Or, may be, some reverting change
 To the old faith of vanished days :
 The incensed air, the mystic praise,
 The barbarous ritual, quaint and
 strange.

Who knows? But they are wrong who
 say
 Man's work is brief and quickly past ;
 If you through all these centuries
 last,
 While they who built you pass away.

The wind, the rain, the sand, are slow ;
 Man fades before his work ; scant
 trace
 Time's finger findeth to efface
 Of him whom seventy years lay low.

The grass grows green awhile, and then
 Is as before ; the work he made
 Casts on his grave a reverend shade
 Through long successive lives of men.

But he ! where is he? Lo, his name
 Has vanished from his wonted place,
 Unknown his tongue, his creed, his
 race ;
 Unknown his soaring hopes of fame.

Only the creatures of the brain,—
 Just laws, wise precepts, deathless
 verse ;
 These weave a chaplet for the hearse,
 And through all change unchanged
 remain.

These will I love as age creeps on ;
 Gray minster, these are ever young ;
 These shall be read and loved and
 sung
 When every stone of you is gone.

No hands have built the monument
 Which to all ages shall endure ;—
 High thoughts and fancies, sweet and
 pure,
 Lives in the quest of goodness spent.

These, though no visible forms confine
 Their spiritual essence fair ;
 Are deathless as the soul they bear,
 And, as its Maker is, divine.

THE BITTER HARVEST.

WHO reaps the harvest of his soul,
 And garners up thought's golden
 grain,
 For him in vain life's tempests rave,
 Fate's rude shocks buffet him in vain.

The storms which shipwreck feebler
 souls,
 Beat harmlessly on him ; the wind,
 Which whirls away the domes of pride,
 Braces the sinews of his mind.

He is set within a tower of strength,
 Beyond thick walls and cloisters
 still ;
 Where, as he sits, no faintest breath
 Stirs the smooth current of his will.

He is stretched in a smiling valley,
 where,
 When hills are dark, the full sun
 shines ;
 Brings gold upon the waving fields,
 And purple clusters on the vines.

He lies in a boundless sylvan shade,
 While all the fields are parched
 around ;
 And hears a sweet bird, singing, sing-
 ing,
 With one clear monotone of sound.

Far, far away from the busy crowd
 And chaffering of the mart, he stands,
 Like a statue on a lonely hill,
 Pondering a scroll within its hands.

Or one who, from high convent walls,
 Looks down at eve upon the plain,
 And sees the children at their sport,
 And turns to chant and prayer again ;

So rich, and yet so very poor,
 So fruitful, yet so void of fruit ;
 Removed from human hopes and fears,
 Far as the man is from the brute ;

So troubled, 'neath a face of calm ;
 So bound with chains, though seem-
 ing free ;

So dead, though with a name to live,
 That it were better not to be.

OF LOVE AND SLEEP.

I SAW Sleep stand by an enchanted
 wood,
 Thick lashes drooping o'er her heavy
 eyes :

Leaning against a flower-cupped tree
 she stood,

The night air gently breathed with
 slumbrous sighs.

Such cloak of silence o'er the world
 was spread,

As on Nile sands enshrouds the mighty
 dead.

About her birds were dumb, and blooms
 were bowed,
 And a thick heavy sweetness filled
 the air ;
 White robed she seemed ; and hidden
 as in a cloud,
 A star-like jewel in her raven hair.
 Downward to earth her cold torch
 would she turn
 With feeble fires that might no longer
 burn.

And in her languid limbs and loosened
 zone
 Such beauty dwelt ; and in her rip-
 pling hair,
 As of old time was hers, and hers
 alone,
 The mother of gods and men divinely
 fair ;
 When whiter than white foam or sand
 she lay,
 The fairest thing beneath the eye of
 day.

To her came Love, a comely youth and
 strong,
 Fair as the morning of a day in
 June ;
 Around him breathed a jocund air of
 song,
 And his limbs moved as to a joyous
 tune :
 With golden locks blown back, and
 eyes aflame,
 To where the sleeping maiden leant, he
 came.

Then they twain passed within that
 mystic grove
 Together, and with them I, myself
 unseen.

Oh, strange, sweet land ! wherein all
 men may prove
 The things they would, the things
 which might have been ;
 Hopeless hopes blossom, withered youth
 revives,
 And sunshine comes again to darkened
 lives.

What sights were theirs in that blest
 wonder-land ?
 See, the white mountain-summits,
 framed in cloud,
 Redden with sunset ; while below them
 stand
 The solemn pine-woods like a funeral
 crowd ;
 And lower still the vineyards twine, and
 make
 A double vintage in the tranquil lake.

Or, after storm-tost nights, on some sea
 isle
 The sudden tropical morning bursts ;
 and lo !
 Bright birds and feathery palms, the
 green hills smile,
 Strange barks, with swarthy crews,
 dart to and fro ;
 And on the blue bay, glittering like a
 crown,
 The white domes of some fair historic
 town.

Or, they fare northward ever, north-
 ward still,
 At midnight, under the unsetting
 sun ;
 O'er endless snows, from hill to icy
 hill,
 Where silence reigns with death, and
 life is done :

Till from the North a sweet wind suddenly ;
And hark ! the warm waves of the
fabulous sea.

Or, some still eve, when summer days
are long,
And the mown hay is sweet, and
wheat is green,
They hear some wood-bird sing the old
fair song
Of joys to be, greater than yet have
been ;
Stretched 'neath the snowy hawthorn,
till the star,
Hung high in heaven, warns them that
home is far.

Or, on the herbless, sun-struck hills, by
night,
Under the silent peaks, they hear the
loud
Wild flutes ; and onward, by the ghostly
light,
Whirled in nude dances, sweeps the
maddened crowd ;
Till the fierce eddy seize them, and they
prove
The shame, the rapture, of unfettered
love.

Or, by the sacred hearth they seem to
sit,
While firelight gleams on many a
sunny head ;
At that fair hour, before the lamp is
lit,
When hearts are fullest, though no
word be said,—
When the world fades, and rank and
wealth and fame,
Seem, matched with this, no better
than a name.

All these they knew ! and then a breeze
of day
Stirred the dark wood ; and then they
seemed to come
Forth with reluctant feet among the
gray,
Bare fields, unfanciful ; and all the
flame
Was burnt from out Love's eyes, and
from his hair,
And his smooth cheek was marked with
lines of care.

And paler showed the maid, more pure
and white
And holier than before. But when I
said,
“ Sweet eyes, be opened ; ” lo, the un-
veiled sight
Was as the awful vision of the dead !
Then knew I, breathing slow, with
difficult breath,
That Love was one with Life, and
Sleep with Death.

BLIND.

THE girl who from her father's door
Sees the cold storm-cloud sweep the
sea,
Cries, wrestling with her anguish sore,
My love ! my love ! ah, where is he ?
And locks her fears within her breast,
Sickening ; while 'neath the breath-
less blaze
He lies, and dreams, in broken rest,
Of homely faces,—happier days.

But when a calm is on the deep,
And scarcely from the quivering blue,
The waves' soft murmur, half asleep,
Speaks hope that he is well, and true :

The brave ship sinks to rise no more
 Beneath the thunderous surge ; and
 he,
 A pale corpse floating on the sea,
 Or dashed like seaweed on the shore.

TO HER PICTURE.

As one who on a lonely bed of pain
 Feels the soft hand he felt when he
 was young ;
 Or, who at eve, on some far Eastern
 plain,
 Hears the old songs once by his
 mother sung :
 So to me, looking on thy portrait, dear,
 Thou and my youth and love are ever
 near.

It may be that the painter failed to
 show,
 How should he not ? the soul within
 thine eyes,—
 Their blue unruffled depths, thy cheeks
 aglow
 With virgin blushes that unbidden
 rise ;
 Thy coral lips, thy white neck, round,
 and fair,
 Or the sweet prodigal auburn of thy
 hair.

How should he ? Not for him thou
 wast, but me ;
 Love shot no sudden splendour in his
 eyes ;
 Love guided not his hand, content to
 see
 Mere beauty, as of sunset-hills or
 skies ;
 Nor soothed his dull ear with the mystic
 strain,
 Heard once a life, and nevermore again.

Only the lovely shell he saw ; the cloak,
 The perfect vesture of the hidden
 soul.

Not for his eyes thy slumbering angel
 woke,
 Stretched in deep sleep, where love's
 broad waters roll :
 Had he but seen her wings of silver
 move,
 He had forgot to paint, and learned to
 love.

Yet is his skill to me for ever blest,
 For that which it has left of grace
 and truth ;
 Those sweet eyes shine, yet need no
 time of rest,
 Still thy fair cheek retains its rounded
 youth.

In wakeful nights I light my lamp, and
 know
 The same dear face I knew long years
 ago.

Yet worn am I, too old for love, and
 gray.
 Too faithful heart, thou shouldst not
 still abide
 With such as I, nor longer deign to stay :
 These are the follies wiser worldlings
 chide.

Thou wouldst transfer those glances,
 wert thou wise,
 To younger lives and more responsive
 eyes.

Ah ! no, remain ; not thus you looked
 of yore ;
 Another, perhaps more worthy, bore
 the prize ;
 I could not tell you then the love I
 bore,
 Or read the soft requital in your
 eyes ;

Now no change comes, now thou art
always kind,
Then thou wast cold and changeful as
the wind.

THE RETURN.

HE stood above the well-known shore ;
Behind, the sea stretched dull and
gray :
And slowly with the breeze of morn
The great ship forged away.

Almost he wished she might return,
And speed him to some further
change ;
The old scenes greeted him again,
And yet all things were strange.

There were the dreams he used to dream
In the long nights when day was
here ;
The shady Sunday path to church,
The winding brooklet clear.

The woods with violets blue in Spring,
The fallow where they chased the
hare,
The gable peeping through the elms,
All filled him with despair.

For all was there except the past—
The past, his youth for dross had
sold !

The past which after-years in vain
Prize more than all their gold.

Then age fell on him with a flash,
Time smote him, and his soul grew
gray,
And thoughts in busier scenes unknown,
Chased youth and hope away.

The past, which seemed so near before,
A step might gain it, came to be
A low cloud sunk beyond a gulf,
Wider than any sea.

Nor what the present had in store,
Knowing ; at last his great suspense
Grew to a bitter load of pain,
Too great for mortal sense.

So, by the well-known paths at last,
He gained the well-remembered door,
Sick for a voice which he should hear,
Ah ! never, never, more

Strange children round, a stranger's
face
Of wonder, so the dream was o'er.
He turned ; the dead past comes not
back.
No, never, never, more.

FOR EVER.

FOR ever and for ever
The changeless oceans roar :
And dash their thundering surges down
Upon the sounding shore :
Yet this swift soul, this lightning will,
Shall these, while they roll on, be still ?

For ever and for ever
The eternal mountains rise,
And lift their virgin snows on high
To meet the silent skies.
Yet shall this soul which measures all,
While these stand steadfast, sink and
fall ?

For ever and for ever
The swift suns roll through space ;
From age to age they wax and wane,
Each in its ordered place :

Yet shall this soul, whose inner eye
Foretells their cycles, fade and die ?

For ever and for ever

We have been, and we are,
Unchanging as the ocean wave,
Unresting as the star :

Though suns stand still, and time be
o'er,

We are, and shall be, evermore.

BEHIND THE VEIL.

I PACED along

The dim cathedral wrapped in reverend
gloom :

I heard the sweet child's song
Spring upwards like a fountain ; and
the boom

Of the tempestuous organ-music swell ;
The hushed low voices and the silvery
bell ;

The incense-laden air ; the kneeling
throng :

I knew them all, and seemed to hear
the cry

Of countless myriads, rising deep and
strong,—

Help us ! we faint, we die.

Our knees are weak, our eyes are blind ;
We seek what we shall never find.

Show but Thy face, and we are Thine,
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine !

I heard the loud
Muezzin from the slender minaret call
" To prayer, To prayer ; " and lo ! the
busy crowd,

Merchant and prince and water-carrier,
all

Turned from the world, and, rapt in
worship, knelt,

Facing the holy city ; and I felt

That from those myriads kneeling,
prostrate, bowed,

A low moan rises to the throne on
high,—

Not shut out quite by error's thickest
cloud,—

Help us ! we faint, we die.

Our knees are weak, our eyes are
blind ;

We seek what we shall never find.

Show but Thy face, and we are Thine,
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine.

I stood before
The glaring temples on the burning
plain ;

I heard the hideous roar

Rise to the stars to drown the shrieks
of pain,

What time the murderous idol swept
along.

I listened to the innocent, mystic song,
Breathed to the jewelled Lotus ever-
more,

In the elder lands, through the ages,
like a sigh,

And heard in low, sweet chant, and
hateful roar,—

Help us ! we faint, we die.

Our knees are weak, our eyes are blind ;
We seek what we shall never find.

Show but Thy face, and we are Thine,
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine !

Ay : everywhere
Echoes the same exceeding bitter cry.

Yet can the Father bear

To hide His presence from the children's
eye ;

Lets loose on good and bad the plague
and sword ;

And though wrong triumph, answers
not a word ?

Only deep down in the heart doth He
declare

His constant presence ; there, though
 the outward sky
 Be darkened, shines a little speck of
 fair,—
 A light which cannot die.
 Though knees be weak, and eyes be
 blind ;
 Though we may seek, and never find ;
 Here doth His hidden glory shine,
 Unknown, Ineffable, Divine !

VISIONS.

OFT in the blazing summer noon,
 And oft beneath the frosty moon,
 When earth and air were hushed and
 still,

And absolute silence seemed to fill
 The farthest border-lands of space,
 I loved in childish thought to trace
 Glimpses of change, which might trans-
 form

The voiceless calm to furious storm ;
 Broke the dull spell, which comes to
 bind

In after-years the sluggish mind ;
 And pictured, borne on fancy's wings,
 The end of all created things.

Then have I seen with dreaming eye,
 The blue depths of the vaulted sky
 Rent without noise ; and in their stead
 A wonder-world of fancy spread,
 A golden city, with domes and spires,
 Lit by a strange sun's mystic fires.
 Portals of dazzling chrysolite,
 Long colonnades of purest white ;
 Streets paved with gold and jewels rare ;
 And higher, in the ambient air,
 A shining Presence undefined :
 Swift seraphs stooping swift as wind
 From pole to pole, and that vast throng
 Which peopled Dante's world of song ;

The last great inquest which shall close
 The tale of human joys and woes ;
 The dreadful Judge, the opening tomb,
 And all the mystery of doom.
 Then woke to find the vision vain,
 And sun or moon shine calm again.

No longer, save in memory's glass,
 These vanished visions come and pass ;
 The clearer light of fuller day
 Has chased these earlier dreams away.
 Faith's eye grows dim with too much
 light,

And fancy flies our clearer sight.
 But shall we mourn her day is o'er,
 That these rapt visions come no more ?
 Nay ; knowledge has its splendours
 too,

Brighter than Fancy's brightest hue.
 I gaze now on the heavens, and see
 How, midst their vast immensity,
 By cosmic laws the planets roll,
 Sped onwards by a central soul ;
 How farther still, and still more far,
 World beyond world, star beyond star,
 So many, and so far, that speech
 And thought must fail the sum to reach.
 This universe of nature teems
 With things more strange than fancy's
 dreams ;

And so at length, with clearer eye,
 Soar beyond childhood's painted sky,
 Up to the Lord of great and small,
 Not onewhere, but pervading all :
 Who made the music of the spheres,
 And yet inclines an ear that hears
 The faintest prayer, the humblest sigh,
 The strong man's groan, the childish
 cry ;

Who guides the stars, yet without whom
 No humblest floweret comes to bloom,
 No lowliest creature comes to birth,
 No dead leaf flutters to the earth :

Who breathed into our souls the breath,
Which neither time nor change nor
death,
Nor hurtling suns at random hurled
And dashed together, world on world,
Can ever kill or quench, till He
Bends down, and bids them not to be.

DOUBT.

WHO but has seen
Once in his life, when youth and health
ran high,
The fair, clear face of truth
Grow dark to his eye?
Who but has known
Cold mists of doubt and icy questionings
Creep round him like a nightmare,
blotting out
The sight of better things.

A hopeless hour,
When all the voices of the soul are
dumb,
When o'er the tossing seas
No light may come,
When God and right
Are gone, and seated on the empty
throne
Are dull philosophies and words of wind,
Making His praise their own.

Better than this,
The burning sins of youth, the old
man's greed,
Than thus to live inane;
To sit and read,
And with blind brain
Daily to treasure up a deadly doubt,
And live a life from which the light
has fled,
And faith's pure fire gone out.

Until at last,
For some blest souls, but never here
for all,
Burns out a sudden light,
And breaks the thrall,
And doubt has fled,
And the soul rises, with a clearer sight
For this its pain, its sorrow, its despair,
To God and truth and right.

Plead we for those
Gently and humbly, as becometh men
On whom the same chill shade
Broods now as then.
So shall they learn
How an eternal wisdom rules above,
And all the cords of Being are
bound fast
To an unfailing love.

ST. DAVID'S HEAD.

SALT sprays deluge it, wild waves buffet it, hurricanes rave;
Summer and winter, the depths of the ocean girdle it round;
In leaden dawns, in golden noon-tides, in silvery moonlight
Never it ceases to hear the old sea's mystical sound.
Surges vex it evermore
By gray cave and sounding shore.

Think of the numberless far-away centuries, long before man,
 When the hot earth with monsters teemed, and with monsters the deep,
 And the red sun loomed faint, and the moon was caught fast in the motionless air,
 And the warm waves seethed through the haze in a secular sleep.

Rock was here and headland then,
 Ere the little lives of men.

Over it long the mastodons crashed through the tropical forest,
 And the great bats swooped overhead through the half-defined blue ;
 Then they passed, and the hideous ape-man, speechless and half-erect,
 Through weary ages of time tore and gibbered and slew.

Grayer skies and chiller air,
 But the self-same rock was there.

Then the savage came and went, and Briton and Roman and Saxon,
 Till our England grew rich and great, and her white sails covered the sea ;
 Thus through all this long story of ours, civil progress and vanquished foeman,
 From Crecy to Trafalgar, from the bondsman down to the free,

Still those dark rocks, and beneath
 Keeps the sea its face of death.

So it shall be when the tide of our greatness has ebbed to the shallows ;
 So when there floats not a ship on this storm-tossed westerly main,
 Hard by, the minster crumbles, the city has shrunk to a village ;
 Thus shall we shrink one day, and our forests be pathless again ;

And the headland stern shall stand,
 Guarding an undiscovered land.

Vex it, O changeless ocean ; rave round it, tempests unceasing ;
 Sink it, great earthquakes, deep in the depths of the fathomless sea ;
 Burn them, fierce fires of the centre, burn rock and ocean together,
 Till the red globe flare throughout space, through the ages to be.

Cease, make an end, dull world, begone •
 How shall I cease while you roll on ?

Time, oh, horrible ! Space, oh, terrible ! Infinite Void !
 Dreadful abysses of Being ! blighting a finite brain ;
 How shall the creatures of thought subsist, when the thinker ceases ?
 Begone, dull figments, be done ! not alone shall you dare to remain.

Without me you yourselves must fall ;
 I hold the measure of you all.

IN VOLHYNIA.

IN Volhynia the peasant mothers,
 When spring-time brings back the
 leaves,
 And the first swallows dart and twitter
 Under the cottage eaves,—

Sit mute at their windows, and listen,
 With eyes brimming over with tears,
 To the broken sounds which are wafted
 To their eager watching ears.

And throw out bread and honey
 To the birds as they scintillate by ;
 And hearts full of yearning and longing,
 Borne out on the wings of a sigh.

For they think that their dear lost
 children,
 The little ones who are gone,
 Come back thus to the heartsick
 mothers
 Who are toiling and sorrowing on.

And those sun-lit wings and flashing
 White breasts, to their tear-dimmed
 eyes
 Bring visions of white child-angels
 Floating in Paradise.

And again to the sounds they hearken,
 Which grew silent while incomplete,
 The music of childish laughter,
 The patter of baby feet.

Till the hearts which are barren and
 childless,
 The homes which are empty and
 cold :
 The nests whence the young have de-
 parted,
 Are filled with young life as of old.

Thus each spring, to those peasant
 mothers,

Comes the old Past again and again ;
 And those sad hearts quicken and
 blossom,
 In a rapture of sorrowless pain.

THE LIVING PAST.

O FAITHFUL souls that watch and
 yearn,

Expectant of the coming light,
 With kindling hearts and eyes that burn
 With hope to see the rule of right ;

The time of peace and of good will,
 When the thick clouds of wrong and
 pain

Roll up as from a shining hill,
 And never more descend again ;

The perfect day, the golden year,
 The end of sorrow and of sighs ;
 Whether the heavenly change be here,
 Or far beyond the sunset skies,—

I cherish you, I love your faith,
 I long with you that this may be ;
 But hark, a dreary voice which saith,
 “Vain dreamer, what were it to thee!”

For though the blest hour strike before
 Another sunrise vex the earth,
 And pain and evil rule no more,
 But vanish in the newer birth,—

Though war and hatred come to cease,
 And sorrow be no more, nor sin,
 And in their stead an endless peace
 Its fair unbroken reign begin,—

What comfort have ye? What shall blot
 The memories of bitter years,

Of joys which have been, but are not,
And floods of unforgotten tears ?

The painful records graven clear
On carven rock or deathless page ;
The long unceasing reign of fear,
The weary tale of lust and rage ;

The ills whose dark sum baffles thought,
Done day by day beneath the sun ?
“ That which is done,” the old sage
taught,
“ Not God Himself can make un-
done.”

For that which has been, still must live,
And 'neath the shallow Present last.
Oh, who will sweet oblivion give,
Who free us from the dreadful Past ?

CHANGES.

You see that tall house opposite ?
Three times within the fleeting year,
Since last the summer-time was here,
Great changes have gone over it.

For first a bridal bright and gay
Filled the long street with riotous
sound ;
And amid smiles from all around,
The newly-wedded passed away.

And when the violets came once more,
And lambs were born, a concourse
went,
Still gayer, still more innocent,
To christening from that stately door.

And now the mute house dull and drear,
From blinded eyes, stares blank and
white ;
And amid dust and glaring light,
The black lines slowly disappear.

ALONE.

WHAT shall it profit a man
To have stood by the source of things,
To have spent the fair years of his
youthful prime
In mystical questionings ;
To have scaled the lovely height,
While his brothers slept below ;
To have seen the vision bright
Which but few on earth may know,—
If when his task be done
He lives his life alone ?
If in the busy street
None come whom he may greet ?
If in his lonely room
With the night the shadows deepen into
ghostly shapes of gloom ?

It may be his soul may say,
“ I have gained me a splendid dower ;
I can look around on the toiling
crowd,
With the pride of a conscious power.
I can hear the passer-by
Tell of all my world-wide fame ;
I have friends I shall not see
Who dwell fondly on my name.
If the sweet smile of wife
Light not my joyless life,
If to my silent home
No childish laughter come,
Shall I no solace find
In communion with the monarchs of the
fair broad realm of mind ? ”

But when sickness wears him, or age
Creeps on, and his soul doth yearn
For the tender hand and the soothing
voice

That shall never more return
 When the lessening throng of friends,
 Not unkind, but each one set
 Safe within white walls of home,
 All the world without forget,—
 Shall not old memories rise
 'Twixt book and weary eyes,
 Till knowledge come to seem
 A profitless vague dream ?
 Shall not he sometimes sigh
 For the careless past unlearnèd, and
 the happy days gone by ?

Ah ! not to be happy alone,
 Are men sent, or to be glad.
 Oft-times the sweetest music is made
 By the voices of the sad.
 The thinker oft is bent
 By a too-great load of thought ;
 The discoverer's soul grows sick
 With the secret vainly sought :
 Lonely may be the home,
 No breath of fame may come,
 Yet through their lives doth shine
 A purple light Divine,
 And a nobler pain they prove
 Than the bloom of lower pleasures, or
 the fleeting spell of love.

SEA VOICES.

PEACE, moaning Sea ; what tale have
 you to tell ?
 What mystic tidings, all unknown
 before ?
 Whether you break in thunder on
 the shore,
 Or whisper like the voice within the
 shell,
 O moaning Sea, I know your burden
 well.

'Tis but the old dull tale, filled full of
 pain ;
 The finger on the dial-plate of time,
 Advancing slow with pitiless beat
 sublime,
 As stoops the day upon the fading
 plain ;
 And that has been which may not be
 again.

The voice of yearning, deep but scarce
 expressed,
 For something which is not, but may
 be yet ;
 Too full of sad continuance to forget,
 Too troubled with desires to be at rest,
 Too self-conflicting ever to be blest.

The voice of hopes and aspirations
 high,
 Swallowed in sand, or shivered on
 the rock ;
 Tumultuous life dashed down with
 sudden shock ;
 And passionate protests, narrowed to a
 sigh,
 From hearts too weak to live,—too
 strong to die.

The voice of old beliefs which long
 have fled,
 Gone with a shriek, and leaving
 naught behind,
 But some vague utterance, cold as
 wintry wind,—
 Some dim remembrance of a ghostly
 dread
 Which lingers still when faith itself is
 dead.

And, above all, through thund'rous
 wintry roar,
 And summer ripple, this, and this
 alone,

For ever do I make this barren
moan:—

No end, there is no end,—on Time's
dull shore

I wail, I beat, I thunder, evermore.

BERLIN, 1871.

THE spring day was all of a flutter
with flags;

The mad chimes were beating like
surf in the air;

The beggars had slunk out of sight with
their rags;

And the balconies teemed with the
rich and the fair.

And below, on each side, the long
vistas were set

In a frame-work of faces, patient and
white,—

Wives, mothers, sweethearts, with full
eyes wet,

And sick hearts longing to see the
sight.

Till at length, when the evening was
waning, there ran

A stir through the crowd, and far-off,
like a flame,

The setting sun burned on the helms
of the van,

And with trampling of hoofs the
proud conquerors came.

And with every step they advanced,
you might hear

Women's voices, half-maddened with
long-deferred joy:

"Thank God! he is safe. See, my
love, we are here!

See! here am I, darling; and this
is our boy!"

Or, "Here am I, dearest, still faithful
and true;

Your own love as of old!" Or an
agonised cry,

As the loved face came not with the
comrades she knew

And the rough soldiers found not a
word to reply.

And pitiful hands led her softly away,
With a loving heart rent and broken
in twain;

And the triumph sweeps onward, in
gallant array,—

The life and the hope, the despair
and the pain.

Where was it? In Egypt, Assyria,
Greece, Rome?

Ages since, or to-day; in the old
world, or new?

Who shall tell? From all time these
strange histories come;

And to-day, as of old, the same story
is true.

And the long line sweeps past, and
the dull world rolls on

Though the rapture is dead and the
sad tears are dry,

And careless of all, till the progress be
done,

Life rides like a conqueror triumph-
ing by.

THE BEACON.

FAIR shines the beacon from its lonely
rock,

Stable alone amid the unstable
waves:

In vain the surge leaps with continual
shock,
In vain around the wintry tempest
raves,
And ocean thunders in her sounding
caves.

For here is life within the gate of death,
Calm light and warmth amid the
storm without ;
Here sleeping love breathes with un-
troubled breath,
And faith, clear-eyed, pierces the
clouds of doubt
And monstrous depths which com-
pass her about.

So calm, so pure, yet prisoned and
confined ;
Fenced by white walls from pleasure
as from pain.
Not always glooms the sea or shrieks
the wind :
Sometimes light zephyrs curl the
azure main,
And the sweet sea-nymphs glide
with all their train.

Or Aphrodite rises from the foam,
And lies all rosy on the golden sand,
And o'er the purple plains the Nereids
roam ;
Sweet laughter comes, borne from
the joyous band,
And faint sweet odours from the
far-off land.

And straightway the impatient soul
within
Loathes its white house which to a
jail doth turn ;
Careless of true or false, of right or
sin,

Careless of praying hands or eyes
that burn,
Or aught that sense can feel or mind
discern.

Knowing but this,—that the unknown
is blest,
Holding delight of free untrammelled
air :
Delight of toil sweeter than any rest,
Fierce storms with cores of calm for
those who dare
Black rayless nights than fairest
noons more fair.

And drifting forth at eve in some frail
boat,
Beholds the old light, like a setting
star,
Sink in the sea, and still doth fare and
float
Adown the night till day-break shows
afar,—
And hark the faint low thunders of
the bar.

Nor if indeed he reach the Blessèd Isle,
Nor if those pitiless crests shall
plunge him down,
Knows he ; but whether breathless
azure smile,
Or furious night and horrible tem-
pests frown,
Living or dying, Freedom wears a
crown.

THE GARDEN OF REGRET.

BEYOND the dim walls of the shadowy
Past,
A sweet vague host of fancies
flourishes,

Like garden seeds in some rough
hollow cast,
Which all unasked the kind earth
nourishes,
And sends up tender blooms more
sweet and fair
Than the dull Present rears with all its
care.

There on its thin stem hangs the frail
white flower;
Far sweeter now she shines within
the shade,
Than when of old within the trim-kept
bower
And perfumed lush parterres her
home she made;
Because her sister blooms are past and
gone,
And this alone it is that lingers on.

The same white flower,—but oh, the
depths of change!
Before, the creamy petals, broad and
strong,
Were all adust with gold, and filled
with strange
Sweet scents, which lurked the
odorous depths among;
Deep in her honeyed wells, the bee
would stay
Content, and birds sing round the live-
long day.

The same white flower—yet changed in
scent and hue.
Now the fair feeble petals curl and
shrink;
The dead smooth surfaces are veined
with blue;
No honeyed draughts they hold for
bee to drink,

Nor busy hum, nor joyous song is
heard.

What hath she left to charm or bee or
bird?

Only a faint sweet odour lingers yet,
Dearer than those rich scents of
former years:

A fragile fairness, fairer through regret,
And watered by the dewy fount of
tears.

To me that outcast flower is dearer
grown,

Than when in those fair gardens over-
blown.

I set her in the garden of my heart,
And water her from life's sincerest
spring;

And lo! once more the frail stems
quicken and start,
Fair honeyed blooms arise and blithe
birds sing:

The old sweet flower in scent and
gorgeous hue,

But not the tender grace that once I
knew.

Alas! not in the Present will she
grow:

The Present has its own blooms
sweet and bright;

Within its four walls life's fair pleasures
blow,

And each gay season brings its own
delight:

Far off in dewy shades the exile sweet
Grows fair, and paths untrodden by
living feet.

There let her stay. I know not if my
theme

Be love, or some fair child of heart
or mind:

Young friendships, hopes, beliefs,
 which like a dream
 Pass from us leaving some sweet
 ghost behind.

Leave them behind, they have been ;
 others are,
 And shall be. Lo ! the spring time is
 not far.

SECOND SERIES (1874).

TO AN UNKNOWN POET.*

DEAR friend, who, two long centuries
 ago,
 Didst tread where since my grandsires
 trod,
 Along thy devious Usk's untroubled
 flow,
 Breathing thy soul to God.

I seek, I, born in these our later days,
 Using the measure thou didst love,
 With halting tribute of too tardy praise,
 A poet throned above.

I in the self-same venerable halls
 And gray quadrangles made my
 home,
 Which heard, new-built, within their
 recent walls,
 Thy youthful footsteps come.

A little grayer now and stiller grown,
 The tranquil refuge now, as then,
 Where our dear country glories in her
 own,
 Apart from alien men.

There, on thy musings broke the painful
 sound

Of arms ; the long-plumed cavaliers
 Clanged thro' the courts—the low fat
 fields around

Were filled with strife and tears.

* Henry Vaughan, the Silurist, died near
 Brecon, 1695.

Constrained by promptings of thy
 ancient race,
 Thy gown and books thou flungst
 away,

To meet the sturdy Roundhead face to
 face
 On many a hard-fought day,

Till thy soft soul grew sick, and thou
 didst turn

To our old hills ; and there, ere
 long,
 Love for thy Amoret, at times, would
 burn
 In some too fervid song.

But soon thy wilder pulses stayed, and,
 life

Grown equable, thy sweet muse mild,
 Sobered by tranquil love of child and
 wife,

Flowed pure and undefiled.

A humble healer thro' a life obscure,
 Thou didst expend thy homely days ;
 Sweet Swan of Usk ! few know how
 clear and pure

Are thy unheeded lays.

One poet shall become a household
 name

Into the nation's heart ingrown ;
 One more than equal miss the meed of
 fame,

And live and die unknown.

So thou, surviving in thy lonely age,
 All but thy own undying love
 Didst pour upon the sympathetic page,
 Words which all hearts can move—

So quaintly fashioned as to add a grace
 To the sweet fancies which they bear,
 Even as a bronze delved from some
 ancient place
 For very rust shows fair.

“They all are gone into the world of
 light!”

It is thy widowed muse that sings,
 And then mounts upward from our
 dazzled sight
 On heavenward soaring wings.

“He that hath found some fledged
 bird’s nest may know”

“At first sight if the bird be flown;”
 “But what fair dell or grove he sings in
 now,”

“That is to him unknown.”

“And yet, as angels in some brighter
 dreams”

“Call to the soul when man doth
 sleep,”

“So some strange thoughts transcend
 our wonted themes,”
 “And into glory peep.”

“O father of eternal life and all
 “Created glories under Thee!”

“Resume Thy Spirit from this world of
 thrall”

“Into true liberty.”

* * * *

Thou hast rejoined thy dear ones now,
 and art,

Dear soul, as then thou wouldst be,
 free.

I, still a prisoner, strive to do my part
 In memory of thee.

Thou art so high, and yet unknown :
 shall I

Repine that I too am obscure ?
 Nay, what care I, though all my verse
 shall die,

If only it is pure ?

So some new singer of the days to be,
 Reading this page with soft young
 eyes,

Shall note the tribute which I pay to
 thee

With youth’s sweet frank surprise.

And musing in himself, perchance shall
 say,

“Two bards whom centuries part are
 here—

One whose high fame and name defy
 decay,

And one who held him dear.”

COMFORT.

THO’ love be bought and honour sold,
 The sunset keeps its glow of gold,
 And round the rosy summits cold
 The white clouds hover, fold on fold.

Tho’ over-ripe the nations rot,
 Tho’ right be dead and faith forgot,
 Tho’ one dull cloud the heavens may
 blot,
 The tender leaf delayeth not.

Tho’ all the world lie sunk in ill,
 The bounteous autumns mellow still,
 By virgin sand and sea-worn hill
 The constant waters ebb and fill.

From out the throng and stress of lies,
 From out the painful noise of sighs,
 One voice of comfort seems to rise :
 " It is the meaner part that dies."

SONG.

If ever, dear,
 I might at last the barren victory gain,
 After long struggle and laborious pain,
 And many a secret tear,
 To think, since think I must of thee,
 Not otherwise than thou of me.

Haply I might
 Thy chilling coldness, thy disdain, thy
 pride,
 Which draw me, half reluctant, to thy
 side,

With a like meed requite,
 And I my too fond self despise,
 Seeing with disenchanting eyes.

But now, alas !
 So fast a prisoner am I to my love,
 No power there is that can my chains
 remove,
 So sweet the caged hours pass,
 That, if it parted me from thee,
 I would not willingly grow free.

Nor would I dare
 To ask for recompense of love again,
 Who love thee for the height of thy
 disdain.

Thou wouldst not show so fair
 If we should own an equal flame,
 Unequal souls, in love the same.

Full well I know
 That what I worship is not wholly thee,
 But a fair dream, a pious fantasy.
 Such as at times doth grow

On yearnings of the cloistered mind,
 Or the rapt vision of the blind.

Scorn me then, sweet,
 I would not thou shouldst leave thy
 lofty place,
 Thy lover should not see thee face to
 face,
 But prostrate at thy feet.
 No recompense, no equal part I seek,
 Only that thou be strong and I be
 weak.

OH, SNOWS SO PURE!

OH, snows so pure ! oh, peaks so high !
 I lift to you a hopeless eye.

I see your icy ramparts drawn
 Between the sleepers and the dawn.

I see you, when the sun has set,
 Flush with the dying daylight yet.

I see you, passionless and pure,
 Above the lightnings stand secure ;

But may not climb, for now the hours
 Are spring's, and earth a maze of
 flowers.

And now, 'mid summer's dust and heat,
 I stay my steps for childish feet.

And now, when autumn glows, I fear
 To lose the harvest of the year.

Now winter frowns, and life runs slow,
 Even on the plains I tread thro' snow.

While you are veiled, or, dimly seen,
 Only reveal what might have been ;

And where high hope would once aspire
Broods a vast storm-cloud dealing fire.

Oh, snows so pure ! oh, peaks so high !
I shall not reach you till I die !

THE BEGINNINGS OF FAITH.

ALL travail of high thought,
All secrets vainly sought,
All struggles for right, heroic, perpetually fought.

Faint gleams of purer fire,
Conquests of gross desire,
Whereby the fettered soul ascends continually higher.

Sweet cares for love or friend
Which ever heavenward tend,
Too deep and true and tender to have on earth their end.

Vile hearts malign and fell,
Lives which no tongue may tell,
So dark and dread and shameful that they breathe a present hell.

White mountain, deep-set lake,
Sea wastes which surge and break,
Fierce storms which, roaring from the north, the midnight forests shake.

Fair morns of summer days,
Rich harvest eves that raise
The soul and heart o'erburdened to an ecstasy of praise.

Low whispers, vague and strange,
Which through our being range,
Breathing perpetual presage of some mighty coming change.

These in the soul do breed
Thoughts which, at last, shall lead
To some clear, firm assurance of a satisfying creed.

A MEMORY.

DOWN dropped the sun upon the sea,
The gradual darkness filled the land.
And 'mid the twilight, silently,
I felt the pressure of a hand.

And a low voice : "Have courage,
friend.
Be of good cheer, 'tis not for long ;
He conquers who awaits the end,
And dares to suffer and be strong."

I have seen many a land since then,
Known many a joy and many a pain.
Victor in many a strife of men,
Vanquished again and yet again.

The ancient sorrow now is not,
Since time can heal the keenest smart ;
Yet the vague memory, scarce forgot,
Lingers deep down within the heart.

Still, when the ruddy flame of gold
Fades into gray on sea and land,
I hear the low sweet voice of old,
I feel the pressure of a hand.

THE NEW ORDER.

THE old lives are dead and gone and rotten,

The old thoughts shall never more be thought,

The old faiths have failed and are forgotten,

The old strifes are done, the fight is fought.

And with a clang and roll, the new
creation
Bursts forth 'mid tears and blood and
tribulation.

Sweet they were, the old days that are
ended,

The golden years, the happy careless
hours

Then, like Pagan gods on the asphodel
extended,

Dreaming, men wove them fancies
fair as flowers.

Love laid near them, Art to cheer them,
youthful Beauty

Sitting crowned upon the marble throne
of Duty.

All good things were theirs to cherish
—lives grown finer

From the heritage of long ancestral
ease,

And a nobler port, and temperate mien
diviner

Than their labours and their vigils
leave to these ;

Gentler voices, smiles more gracious,
and the fashion

Of their soft lives tuned to pity and
compassion.

Naught men knew of science, now
grown rigid

With its teaching of inexpiable sin ;
Nor the dull pedantic gospel, dead and
frigid,

Of a heaven where mind alone may
enter in,

Doom awaiting, stern and silent, all
transgression,

And no saint with power to make an
intercession.

For a Ruler, as men thought they saw
above them,

More than earthly rulers, pitiful and
mild,

A Father with a stronger love to love
them

Than the love an earthly father bears
his child—

God above them, and for pleader and
defender

Christ's face stooping, like his mother's,
true and tender.

But now there seems no place for the
Creator

To hold his long unbroken chain of
law,

Nor any need for heaven-sent Mediator,
Nor the Providence our fathers
thought they saw.

Only a dull world-system, always tend-
ing

To a blind goal, by a blind rule
unbending.

And for the courtesy and tender graces,
The chivalries and charities of old,

A dull and equal arrogance effaces
Soft sympathies by hard demands and
cold ;

And the giver giveth not, lest any
blame him,

And the taker may not take, lest taking
shame him.

Be still, oh ye of little faith, repining
That the purpose of the Eternal will
is dead.

The silent stars forget not yet their
shining,

Daily the full sun journeys over-
head.

How shall mind's realm alone forget
its reason,
When the sure years roll season after
season ?

There shall rise from this confused
sound of voices

A firmer faith than that our fathers
knew,

A deep religion, which alone rejoices

In worship of the Infinitely True,
Not built on rite or portent, but a finer
And purer reverence for a Lord diviner.

There shall come from out this noise of
strife and groaning

A broader and a juster brotherhood,

A deep equality of aim, postponing

All selfish seeking to the general good.

There shall come a time when each
shall to another

Be as Christ would have him—brother
unto brother.

There shall come a time when know-
ledge wide extended,

Sinks each man's pleasure in the
general health,

And all shall hold irrevocably blended

The individual and the common-
wealth,

When man and woman in an equal union
Shall merge, and marriage be a true
communion.

There shall come a time when brother-
hood shows stronger

Than the narrow bounds which now
distract the world ;

When the cannons roar and trumpets
blare no longer,

And the ironclad rusts, and battle
flags are furled ;

When the bars of creed and speech and
race, which sever,
Shall be fused in one humanity for ever.

Oh, glorious end ! oh, blessed consum-
mation !

Oh, precious day ! for which we wait
and yearn.

Thou shalt come, and knit men nation
unto nation.

But not for us, who watch to day
and burn,

Thou shalt come, but after what long
years of trial,

Weary watchings, baffled longings, dull
denial !

AT MIDNIGHT.

THEY were two poor young girls, little
older than children,

Who passed through the midnight
streets of the city

Singing.

Poorly clad, morning-eyed, with a
strange look of shyness,

Linked arms, and round cheeks, and
smooth heads bent together,

Singing.

Singing, great Heaven ! with their
fresh childish voices,

Some low-murmured ditty, half hymn-
tune, half love-song,

Singing,

Always by hushed square, and long
street deserted,

As from school by the old village street
on fair evenings,

Singing,

Singing, and knowing it not, the old
burden

That is born out of secular wrongs and
oppressions,

Singing,

Of selfish riches, of misery and hun-
ger,

Of sin that is bred of the wants of the
wretched,

Singing,

Of poor bribes that purchase souls, of
the endless,

Perpetual harvest of pain and of evil,
Singing,

So, they passed to the flaring sin-
befouled places,

And amid the thick throng of the fallen
I lost them,

Singing,

A hymn-tune, a love-song, a prayer
chanted backward,

A witch spell unholy, a sweet suffrage
saintly

Singing.

NEMESIS.

WHO, without fear

Piercing the inmost deeps of silent
thought,

Has won the prize with lonely labour
sought,

And many a bitter tear,

He in his breast doth hold

A rarer thing than gold,

And a fair treasure greater than in
words is told.

For he shall learn,

Not from another's lore, but his own
soul,

Whither life's hidden ocean currents
roll,

And with sure helm shall turn

Into a haven fair,

Where, on the breathless air,

Nor wave nor storm shall break, but
peace is everywhere.

There, in light boat

Laid on the soft breast of the summer
sea,

Lapt day by day in great tranquillity,

He carelessly shall float.

He scarce shall see or hear

A sight or sound of fear,

Only a low-voiced siren always gliding
near.

Without the bar

The enormous surges leap from sea to
sky.

Upon the ghostly inland summits
high

The avalanche thunders far.

On the dull plains below,

In long successions slow

The toiling generations sow, and reap,
and sow.

Dream-like, he sees

The lurid smoke blot the beleaguered
town,

Or the great earthquake shake the city
down;

Labours and miseries;

Fire takes them—famine, flood,

And fever's hideous brood.

By night the black skies redden with a
glare like blood.

For him, meanwhile,
Laid in the shelter of his silken sail,
Tho' wind and storm on sea and land
prevail,
The enchanted waters smile.
Always in that calm deep,
Wherein life's currents sleep,
He sees high heaven reflected, tho' all
men may weep.

Yet now and then
Between the stars and him, deep, sunk
below,
He starts to see a strange dead sem-
blance grow,
Gone from the eyes of men.
Some thin and pale-eyed ghost,
By marred reflections crost,
Of thoughts, and faiths, and yearnings
long since lost.

And if these fade
Betimes, he slowly gains to peace
again ;
But if too long they tarry, such a pain
Those clear depths doth invade,
That for sheer terror he,
And utter misery,
Flies to the storm-wrapt hills and
hungry calling sea.

TO A CHILD OF FANCY.

My little dove, my little lamb,
In whom again a child I am ;
My innocent, on whose fair head
The glories of the unknown are shed ;

Who thro' the laughing summer day
Spendest the rosy hours in play,
Too much by joyous life possest
To give a willing thought to rest ;

Who, with the earliest shades of night,
White-robed, in happy slumbers light,
Recallest in thy stainless calm
An angel resting from its psalm ;

Whence art thou come? What power
could teach
The secret of thy broken speech?
What agile limb, what stalwart arm,
Like thy sweet feebleness can charm?

With what a rapture of surprise
This fair world meets thy steadfast eyes,
As if they saw reflected there
Faint images of scenes more fair.

Leaving another heaven behind,
A heaven on earth thou cam'st to find ;
This world, so full of misery,
Opens celestial gates for thee.

Oh ! if thou mightst not e'er grow wise
With the sad learning born of sighs ;
If those soft eyes might never here
Grow dim for any bitter tear.

Vain thought,—no creature born of
earth
Blooms best 'neath cloudless skies of
mirth ;

Only soft rains and clouds can dress
Life's tree with flowers of blessedness.

Whate'er the lot thy fate shall give,
At least, while life is mine to live,
Thou shalt not lack a share of love,
My little lamb, my little dove !

SONG.

It was not that thy eyes
Were blue as autumn skies,
It was not that thy hair
Was as an angel's fair.

No excellence of form could move
A finer soul to so much love.

Nor that in thee I sought
For precious gems of thought,
Nor ever hoped to find
Hid treasure in thy mind,
Gray wisdom comes with time and age,
And thine was an unwritten page.

But that I seemed in thee
My other self to see,
Yet purer and more high
Than meets my inner eye,
Like that enamoured boy who, gazing
down,
His lower self would in his higher
drown.

THE ORGAN-BOY.

GREAT brown eyes,
Thick plumes of hair,
Old corduroys
The worse for wear ;
A buttoned jacket,
And peeping out
An ape's grave poll,
Or a guinea pig's snout ;
A sun-kissed face,
And a dimpled mouth,
With the white flashing teeth
And soft smile of the south ;
A young back bent,
Not with age or care,
But the load of poor music
'Tis fated to bear :
But a commonplace picture
To commonplace eyes,
Yet full of a charm
Which the thinker will prize.

They were stern cold rulers,
Those Romans of old,
Scorning letters and art
For conquest and gold ;
Yet leavening mankind,
In mind and in tongue,
With the laws that they made
And the songs that they sung :
Sitting rose-crowned,
With pleasure-choked breath,
As the nude young limbs crimsoned,
Then stiffened in death ;
Piling up monuments
Greater than praise,
Thoughts and deeds that shall live
To the latest of days :
Adding province to province,
And sea to sea,
Till the idol fell down
And the world rose up free.

And this is the outcome,
This vagabond child
With that statue-like face
And eyes soft and mild,
This creature so humble,
So gay, yet so meek,
Whose sole strength is only
The strength of the weak ;
Of those long cruel ages
Of lust and of guile,
Naught left us to-day
But an innocent smile.
For the laboured appeal
Of the orator's art,
A few childish accents
That reach to the heart.
For those stern legions speeding
O'er sea and o'er land,
But a pitiful glance
And a suppliant hand.
I could moralize still ;
But the organ begins,

And the tired ape swings downward
And capers and grins :

And away flies romance.
And yet, time after time,
As I dwell on days spent
In a sunnier clime,
Of blue lakes deep set
In the olive-clad mountains,
Of gleaming white palaces
Girt with cool fountains,
Of minsters where every
Carved stone is a treasure,
Of sweet music hovering
'Twixt pain and 'twixt pleasure ;
Of chambers enriched,
On all sides, overhead,
With the deathless creations
Of hands that are dead ;
Of still cloisters holy,
And twilight arcade,
Where the lovers still saunter
Thro' chequers of shade ;
Of tomb and of temple,
Arena and column,
'Mid to-day's garish splendours,
Sombre and solemn ;
Of the marvellous town
With the salt-flowing street,
Where colour burns deepest,
And music most sweet ;
Of her the great mother,
Who centuries sate
'Neath a black shadow blotting
The days she was great ;
Who was plunged in such shame—
She, our source and 'our home—
That a foul spectre only
Was left us of Rome ;
She who, seeming to sleep
Thro' all ages to be,
Was the priests', is mankind's,
Was a slave, and is free !

I turn with grave thought
To this child of the ages,
And to all that is writ
In Time's hidden pages.
Shall young Howards or Guelphs,
In the days that shall come,
Wander forth seeking bread
Far from England and home ?

Shall they sail to new continents,
English no more,
Or turn—strange reverse—
To the old classic shore ?
Shall fair locks and blue eyes,
And the rose on the cheek,
Find a language of pity
The tongue cannot speak—
“ Not English, but angels ? ”
Shall this tale be told
Of Romans to be
As of Romans of old ?
Shall they too have monkeys
And music ? Will any
Try their luck with an engine
Or toy spinning-jenny ?

Shall we too be led
By that mirage of Art
Which saps the true strength
Of the national heart ?
The sensuous glamour,
The dreamland of grace,
Which rot the strong manhood
They fail to replace ;
Which at once are the glory,
The ruin, the shame,
Of the beautiful lands
And ripe souls whence they came ?

Oh, my England ! oh, Mother
Of Freemen ! oh, sweet,
Sad toiler majestic,
With labour-worn feet !

Brave worker, girt round,
 Inexpugnable, free,
 With tumultuous sound
 And salt spume of the sea,
 Fenced off from the clamour
 Of alien mankind
 By the surf on the rock,
 And the shriek of the wind,
 Tho' the hot Gaul shall envy,
 The cold German flout thee,
 Thy far children scorn thee,
 Still thou shalt be great,
 Still march on uncaring,
 Thy perils unsharing,
 Alone, and yet daring
 Thy infinite fate.
 Yet ever remembering
 The precepts of gold,
 That were written in part
 For the great ones of old—
 "Let other hands fashion
 The marvels of art ;
 To thee fate has given
 A loftier part.
 To rule the wide peoples ;
 To bind them to thee"
 By the sole bond of loving,
 That bindeth the free.
 To hold thy own place,
 Neither lawless nor slave ;
 Not driven by the despot,
 Nor tricked by the knave.

But these thoughts are too solemn,
 So play, my child, play,
 Never heeding the connoisseur
 Over the way,
 The last dances of course ;
 Then, with scant pause between,
 "Home, Sweet Home," the "Old
 Hundredth,"
 And "God Save the Queen."

See the poor children swarm
 From dark court and dull street,
 As the gay music quickens
 The lightsome young feet.
 See them now whirl away,
 Now insidiously come,
 With a coy grace which conquers
 The squalor of home.
 See the pallid cheeks flushing
 With innocent pleasure
 At the hurry and haste
 Of the quick-footed measure.
 See the dull eyes now bright,
 And now happily dim,
 For some soft-dying cadence
 Of love-song or hymn.
 Dear souls, little joy
 Of their young lives have they,
 So thro' hymn-tune and song-tune
 Play on, my child, play.

For tho' dull pedants chatter
 Of musical taste,
 Talk of hindered researches,
 And hours run to waste ;
 Tho' they tell us of thoughts
 To ennoble mankind
 Which your poor measures chase
 From the labouring mind ;
 While your music rejoices
 One joyless young heart,
 Perish bookworms and books,
 Perish learning and art—
 Of my vagabond fancies
 I'll e'en take my fill.
 "Qualche cosa, signor ?"
 Yes, my child, that I will.

PROCESSIONS.

To and fro, to and fro,
 The long, long processions go,

Fainter now and now more bright,
 Now in shadow, now in light ;
 Gay and sad, and gay again,
 Mixed of pleasure, mixed of pain.
 Bridal song and burial dirge,
 Rippling blue and leaden surge ;
 Sunlit plain and storm-wrapt hill,
 Sainly lives or stained with ill ;
 Youth and fire and frolic mirth,
 Cold age bending back to earth ;
 Hope and faith and high endeavour,
 Dead lives slowly waning ever ;
 Gleams of varying sun and shade,
 Buds that burst, and flowers that fade ;
 Lives that spring, and lives that fall,
 And a Hidden Will o'er all.

FOR LIFE.

SHUT in by self, as by a brazen wall,
 In a dry, windless court alone,
 Where no refreshing dews of eve may
 fall,
 Nor morning sun has shone.

But ever broader, ever higher, higher,
 And ever yearly stronger grown,
 In long circuitous folds high towers
 aspire
 Around her central throne.

And every year adds some fair outer-
 court,
 Green, lit with fountains, tended well,
 Some dainty pleasaunce fit for joy and
 sport,
 But not wherein to dwell.

Or some high palace spired with fretted
 gold,
 And tricked with gems of thought and
 art ;

In blank perspective ranks its chambers
 cold,
 Too fair to touch the heart.

For far within the inmost coil of towers,
 Wrapt round with shadows like a cloak,
 Where on the twilight hush of slow-
 paced hours
 Full utterance never broke ;

Neither of laughter nor the painful
 sound
 Of great thoughts come to sudden birth,
 Nor murmurs from the Sea that frets
 around
 The dull laborious earth ;

Nor voice of love or child, nor note of
 glee,
 Nor sigh, nor any weal nor woe—
 Naught but a chill, at times, as hope-
 lessly
 The slow years come and go ;

She broods immured, a devil or a saint,
 Shut fast within a lonely cell,
 Peopled with beatific visions faint,
 Or ghostly shapes of hell.

And every year she hears from some
 high gate
 That breaks the dizzy circuit of the
 wall,
 By hands invisible, but strong as fate,
 The loud portcullis fall.

And every year upon her duller ear
 Faint and more faint the outward
 echoes come,
 Fainter the mingled tones of hope and
 fear,
 To this her cloistered home.

Till, when the weary circuit's done and
past,
The last gate clangs, the tall towers
sway and fall,
A great voice calls with thunders, and
at last
The captive breaks her thrall !

IN THE PARK.

THE stock-jobbers' madams dash
In splendour thro' park and street.
'Tis a lightning of wheels that flash,
'Tis a thunder of high-stepping feet.
Shrink aside, vile churl, for these prin-
cesses bold—
These creatures of jewels and ermine
and gold—

As they loll by in insolent pride,
Scarce deigning a glance of the eye,
They scatter their mud stains far
and wide
On the humbler passer-by—
Some rhymester it may be, whose
bitter pen
Shall pay them their mud stains with
interest again.

And, meanwhile, in some fetid street
Their spouse and provider sits—
A swindler fattening on lie and
cheat,
Sole fruit of his sordid wits—
Full fed and bloated, or wan and pale,
And haunted with fears of an imminent
gaol.

When my lady of high degree
Rolls by with her lackeys ablaze,
It gladdens my heart, good
madams, to see
The disdain of you in her gaze.

I love her little, but, matched with you,
I could fall on my knees to a pride so
true.

Or when *Lais* rattles by
In her vesture of visible shame,
Poor child, I whisper, and who
am I
To call her dead life by its name?
Sad tawdry splendours that, one sure
day,
Will spread swift pinions and flutter
away !

But with you, vile spawn of deceit,
What need to be chary of ire?
Get down, I say, on your useless
feet,
And cleanse them with honest mire.
Down with you, 'tis time, ere your
coaches be made
The central block of a new barricade.

Yet, perhaps, since in this poor life
Things are double, each against
each,
Among you sometimes is the
mother and wife
With her darlings to cherish and
teach,
The gentle lady, tender and kind,
With no shadow of evil on heart or
mind.

Ah, riddle of things ! ah, great
Perpetual struggle and war !
The good which should be, in-
separate,
From the evil things that are—
How shall I, with purblind vision,
arraign
The marvellous measures of joy and
pain ?

Roll by then, brave dames, roll by;
 You are part of a scheme, I trow.
 No more will I look with a covet-
 ous eye
 On your splendours of pomp and
 show;
 For I see in your gorgeous chariots the
 strife,
 The problem, the wonder, the satire,
 of life.

LOSS AND GAIN.

FROM day to day, from year to year,
 New waves of change assail us here;
 Each day, each year, prolongs the chain
 Where pleasure alternates with pain.

New earth-born exhalations rise,
 To hide the heavens from our eyes;
 New clouds obscure the vision fair,
 Which once was round us everywhere.

New precious obligations come,
 New sanctities of love and home,
 New tender hopes, new anxious fears,
 And sweet experiences of tears.

Old tastes are lost, old thoughts grow
 strange,
 Old longings gradually change,
 Old faiths seem no more dear or true,
 Lost in the full light of the new.

Youth's boundless aspirations fled,
 And every wild ambition dead;
 Love not a meteor blinding sight,
 But a pure ray of sober light.

And for the passionate self of old,
 A deep affection, calm, not cold;
 A pitying love serenely kind,
 A broader trust, a juster mind,

A faith which occupies the heart,
 Tho' the brain halts to bear its part,
 Which threat and promise fail to move,
 Like the dim consciousness of love.

Tho' much be taken, much is left,
 Not all forsaken nor bereft;
 From change on change we come to
 rest,
 And the last moment is the best.

SONG.

"ONLY a woman's hair,"
 A fair lock severed and dead;
 But where is the maiden—where
 That delicate head?

Perhaps she is rich and fair,
 Perhaps she is poor and worn,
 And 'twere better that one somewhere
 Had never been born.

And the careless hand that threw
 That faded tress away—
 Ah! the false heart that once seemed
 true,
 Ah! love flung away.

THE APOLOGY.

I MAY not scorn, I cannot prize
 Those whose quick-coming fancies rise
 Only in quaint disguise—

Some trick of speech, or mien, or
 dress,
 Some obsolete uncomeliness,
 Some ancient wickedness.

Strange words antique for things not
 strange,
 Like broken tower and mould'ring
 grange,
 Made fair through time and change.

Legends of knight, and squire, and
 dame,
 With this our common life the same
 In glory and in shame.

Mean lives and narrow aims which owe
 The glamour and the charm they show
 To that strange "Long ago ;"

Nay, meaner, lower than our own,
 Because To-day is wider grown,
 Knows deeper, and is known.

I doubt if anything there be
 Which best thro' mask of chivalry,
 Reveals myself to me ;

Myself, its yearnings and desires,
 Its glimpses of supernal fires,
 The something which aspires ;

Myself, the thing of blot and stain,
 Which fallen, rises, falls again,
 A mystery of pain ;

Myself, the toiler slow to earn,
 The thinker sowing words that burn,
 The sensuous in turn,

The vanquished, the disgraced, the
 saint,
 Now free as air, now bound and faint,
 By everyday constraint.

Or, if too near the present lies
 For common brains and common eyes
 To probe its mysteries.

If feeble fancy fails to tear
 The outer husk of fact, and bare
 The seed to vital air,

But too extended, too immense,
 Life's orb a vast circumference
 Stretches for mortal sense ;

If simpler shows the past, more fair,
 Set in a pure and luminous air,
 Not dimmed by mists of care,

Seeming to breathe a lighter strain
 Of lutes and lyres where none complain
 With undertones of pain ;—

If haply there we seem to view
 Ourselves, behind a veil, yet true
 The germ from which we grew ;

Not less our duty and our pride
 Forbid to leave unsought, untried,
 The glories at our side.

What ? shall the limner only paint
 Blue hills with adumbrations faint,
 Or misty aureoled saint,

And scorn to ponder flower or tree,
 Ripe fields, child-faces, summer sea,
 And all fair things that be ;

Nor care thro' passion's endless play,
 Our living brethren to portray,
 Who fare to doom to-day,

When the sun's finger deigns to trace
 Each line and feature of man's face,
 Its beauty and disgrace ?

Or shall the skilled musician dare
 Only to sound some jocund air
 Arcadian, free from care,

Round whom in strains that scorn
control

The mighty diapasons roll,
That speak from soul to soul ;

Our mystical modern music deep,
Not piped by shepherds to their sheep,
But wrung from souls that weep ;

Where seldom melody is heard,
Nor simple woodland note of bird,
So deep a depth is stirred,

Such blended harmonies divine
Across the core of sweetness twine
As round the grape the vine ?

Or shall some false cold dream of art
Corrupt the voice and chill the heart,
And turn us from our part,

Blot out the precious lesson won
From all the ages past and done,
That bard and seer are one ?

Dull creed of earthy souls ! who tell
That, be the song of heaven or hell,
Who truly sings, sings well,

And with the same encomiums greet
The satyr baring brutish feet,
And pure child-angels sweet ;

Whose praise in equal meed can share
The Mænad with distempered hair,
The cold Madonna fair.

Great singers of the past ! whose song
Still streams down earthward pure and
strong,
Free from all stain of wrong.

Whose lives were chequered, but whose
verse

The generations still rehearse ;
Yet never soul grew worse.

What is it that these would ? shall I,
Born late in time, consent to lie
In the old misery ?

I—who have learnt that flesh is dust,
What gulfs dissever love from lust,
The wrongful from the just—

Put on again the rags of sense,
A Pagan without innocence,
A Christian in offence ?

Perish the thought ! I am to-day
What God and Time have made me ;
they
Have ordered, I obey.

And day by day the labouring earth
Whirls on—glad mysteries of birth,
Sad death throes, sorrow, mirth,

Youth's flower just bursting into bloom,
Wan age, a sun which sets in gloom,
The cradle, and the tomb ;

These are around me—hope and fear,
Not fables, but alive and near,
Fresh smile and scarce-dried tear ;

These are around me, these I sing,
These, these of every thought and thing,
My verse shall heavenward wing.

The sun but seems to kiss the hill,
And all the vast eternal Will
Is moving, working, still

God is, Truth lives, and overhead
Behold a visible glory spread ;
Only the past is dead.

Courage ! arise ; if hard it seem
To sing the present, yet we deem
'Tis worthier than a dream.

Awake, arise, for to the bold
The seeming desert comes to hold
Blossoms of white and gold.

* * * *

Shall I then choose to take my side
With those who love their thoughts to
hide
In vague abstractions wide ?

Whose dim verse struggles to recall
The hopes, the fears that rise and fall
Deep in the souls of all.

Who fitly choose a fitting theme.
Not things which neither are nor seem,
No visionary dream,

But the great psalm of life, the long
Harmonious confluence of song,
Thro' all the ages strong,

But grown to wider scale to-day,
And sweeping fuller chords than they
Knew who have passed away.

A worthy theme for worthy bard
But all too often blurred and marred
By intonations hard.

So that the common eye and ear
Can dimly see and faintly hear
What should be bright and clear.

Who wing the fiery thought so high,
An arrow shot into the sky,
Its failing forces die,

And all the straining eye discerns
Is but a spark which feebly burns,
Then quenched to earth returns.

Or with a borrowed lyre devote
Hoarse accent and untuneful throat
To sound a difficult note,

By currents of conflicting thought,
And counter themes which rise unsought,
And jangling chords distraught.

Not song, but science, sign not sound,
Not soaring to high heaven, but bound
Fast to the common ground.

Who with a pitiless skill dissect
What secret sources, vexed and checked,
Surge upward in effect,

And trace in endless struggling rhyme
How hearts forlorn of love and time
Have rotted into crime.

Or those who, baffled and opprest
By life's incessant fierce unrest,
Where naught that is seems best,

Assail the tyrant, lash the wrong,
Till but a wild invective long,
Is left in lieu of song.

Most precious all, yet this is sure,
The song which longest shall endure
Is simple, sweet, and pure.

Not psychologic riddles fine,
Not keen analysis, combine
In verse we feel divine.

Nor fierce o'erbalanced rage alone,
Which mars the rhyme, and dulls the
tone—
They may not sing who groan ;

But a sweet cadence, wanting much
Of depth, perhaps, and fire, but such
As finer souls can touch,

To finer issues ; such as come
To him who far afield must roam,
Thinking old thoughts of home.

Or who in Sabbath twilights hears
His children lisped a hymn, and fears
Lest they should see his tears.

* * * *

Wherefore, my soul, if song be thine,
If any gleam of things divine
Thro' thee may dimly shine,

If ever any faintest note
Of far-off sweetness swell thy throat,
True echo tho' remote,

This is my task, to sing To-day,
Not dead years past and fled away,
But this alone—To-day.

Or if I pause a little space
Striving, across the gulf, to trace
Some fine, forgotten face—

Some monarch of the race whose name
Still lives upon the lips of fame,
Touched by no stain of shame ;

Some sweet old love-tale, ever young,
Which of old time the burning tongue
Of god-like bard has sung ;

Some meed of effort nobly won,
Some more than human task begun,
Precious though left undone ;

Some awful story, strong to show
How passions unrestricted flow
Into a sea of woe ;

Not less my powers I strive to bend,
Not less my song aspires to tend
To one unchanging end,

By lofty aspirations, stirred
Thro' homely music, daily heard,
Trite phrase and common word,

Simple, but holding at the core
Thoughts which strange speech and
varied lore
Have hid from men before.

To lift how little howsoe'er
The hearts of toilers struggling here,
In joyless lives and sere.

To make a little lighter yet
Their lives by daily ills beset,
Whom men and laws forget.

To sing, if sing I must, of love
As a pure spell, with power to move
Dull hearts to things above.

But choosing rather to portray
The warring tides of thought which
stray
Thro' doubting souls to-day.

Or if at times, with straining eye
And voice, I dwell on things which lie
Hidden in Futurity,

And strive to tell in halting rhyme
The glorious dawn, the golden prime,
The victories of Time,

The race transfigured, wrong redressed,
None worn with labour, nor oppressed,
But peace for all and rest,

And knowledge throwing wide the
 shrine
 From whose broad doorways seems to
 shine
 An effluence Divine ;—

If of these visions fain to dream,
 Not less I hold, whate'er may seem,
 The Present for my theme,

The vain regret remembering,
 Which lost occasion knows to bring,—
 Afraid, yet bound, to sing.

SONG.

AH ! love is like a tender flower
 Hid in the opening leaves of life,
 Which, when the springtide calls, has
 power

To scorn the elemental strife—
 So strong, that well it knows to gain
 Fresh sweetness from the wind and rain.

So strong, and yet so weak, alas !
 It waits the wooing of the sun ;
 'Mid frosts and snows the brief hours
 pass,

And when they melt the spring is done.
 Gay blooms and honeyed fruits may
 come,

But spring is dead, and birds are dumb.

AS IN A PICTURE.

WHITE, on a cliff they stood ;
 Beyond, a cypress wood.

Three there were—one who wept,
 And one as though he slept ;

One with wide steadfast eyes
 Fixed in a sad surprise.

Day, like a dying hymn,
 Grew gradually dim.

A solitary star
 Gleamed on them from afar.

Beneath, by sand and cave
 Sobbed the continual wave.

Long time in reverent thought
 Who these might be I sought,

Then suddenly I said,
 "Oh, Lord of quick and dead !"

AT AN ALMSHOUSE.

BENEATH these shadows holy
 Age rests, or paces slowly,
 And muses, muses always
 On that which once has been,
 Recalling years long ended,
 And vanished visions splendid ;
 The throb, the flush of old days,
 When all the world was green.

When every hour brought pleasure,
 And every flower a treasure,
 And whispered words were spoken,
 And love was everywhere.
 The swift brief hour of passion,
 And then the old, old fashion,
 The childish accents broken—
 Oh, precious days and fair !

The years of self-denial,
 Blissful tho' full of trial,
 The young blooms waxing stronger,
 The older come to fruit.

The tranquil days of gladness,
The gradual calm and sadness,
When childhood cheers no longer,
And all the house is mute.

Gone, but not wholly taken ;
Left, yet not all forsaken.
Again the worn hearts cherish
The memories of home ;
Again love-whispers greet them,
Their children run to meet them,
Blest dreams which never perish
Until the end be come.

A YORKSHIRE RIVER.

THE silent surfaces sleep
With a sullen viscous flow,
And scarce in the squalid deep
Swing the dead weeds to and fro,
And no living thing is there to swim or
creep
In the sunless gulfs below.

And beneath are the ooze and the
slime,
Where the corpse lies as it fell,
The hidden secrets of crime
Which no living tongue shall tell,
The shameful story of time,
The old, old burden of hell.

All the grasses upon the bank
Are bitter with scurf and drift,
And the reeds are withered and dank ;
And sometimes, when the smoke clouds
shift,
You may see the tall shafts in a hideous
rank
Their sulphurous fumes uplift.

From the black blot up the stream
The funeral barges glide,

And the waves part as in a dream,
From broad bow and sunken side ;
And 'tis "greed, greed !" hisses from
coal and from steam,
Foul freightage and turbid tide,

Like the life of a slumb'ring soul
Grown dull in content and health,
Whose dark depths lazily roll,
Whose still currents creep by stealth.
Nor sorrow nor yearning comes to
control
The monotonous tide of wealth.

Fair or foul, in life as in death,
One blight and corruption o'er all,
Blow on them, great wind, with thy
breath,
Fall, blinding water-floods, fall,
Till the dead life below awakeneth,
And deep unto deep doth call !

FOR JUDGMENT.

THE form was young, the face was
fair,
Her hands seemed still together tied,
'Twas as if Eve was standing there,
With the stern guardian at her side.

I mused on all the depths of will,
Of judgment, knowledge, right, and
wrong.

The pleadings crept their course, and
still

I sat in musings sad and long.

But when they ceased the tale of
shame,

And the cold voice pronounced her
name,

But one thought held me, that was all,
'Twas thus we did my sister call.

ODE ON A FAIR SPRING
MORNING.

COME, friend, let us forget
The turmoil of the world a little while,
For now the soft skies smile,
With dew the flowers are wet.
Let us away awhile
With fierce unrest and carking thoughts
of care,
And breathe a little while the jocund
air,
And sing the joyous measures sung
By blither singers, when the world was
young.

For still the world is young, for still
the spring
Renews itself, and still the lengthening
hours
Bring back the month of flowers ;
The leaves are green to-day as those of
old,
For Chaucer and for Shakspeare ; still
the gold
Of August gilds the rippling breadths
of wheat ;
Young maids are fair and sweet
As when they frolicked gay, with flash-
ing feet,
Round the old May-pole. All young
things rejoice.
No sorrow dulls the blackbird's mellow
voice,
Thro' the clear summer dawns or twi-
lights long.
With aspect not more dim
Thro' space the planets swim
Than of old time o'er the Chaldean
plain.
We only, we alone,
Let jarring discords mar our song.

And find our music take a lower tone.
We only with dim eyes
And laboured vision feebly strain,
And flout the undying splendours of
the skies.

Oh, see how glorious show,
On this fair morn in May, the clear-cut
hills,
The dewy lawns, the hawthorns white,
Argent on plains of gold, the growing
light
Pure as when first on the young earth
The faint warm sunlight came to birth.
There is a nameless air
Of sweet renewal over all which fills
The earth and sky with life, and every-
where,
Before the scarce seen sun begins to
glow,
The birds awake which slumbered all
night long,
And with a gush of song,
First doubting of their strain, then full
and wide
Raise their fresh hymns thro' all the
country side ;
Already, above the dewy clover,
The soaring lark begins to hover
Over his mate's low nest ;
And soon, from childhood's early rest
In hall and cottage, to the casement
rise
The little ones with their fresh opened
eyes.
And gaze on the old Earth, which still
grows new,
And see the tranquil heaven's unclouded
blue,
And, since as yet no sight nor sound of
toil
The fair spread, peaceful picture comes
to soil,

Look with their young and steadfast gaze
Fixed in such artless sweet amaze
As Adam knew, when first on either
hand

He saw the virgin landscapes of the
morning land.

Oh, youth, dawn, springtide, triune
miracle,

Renewing life in earth, and sky, and
man,

By what eternal plan

Dost thou revive again and yet again ?

There is no morn that breaks,

No bud that bursts, no life that comes
to birth,

But the rapt fancy takes,

Far from the duller plains of mind and
earth,

Up to the source and origin of things,

Where, poised on brooding wings,

It seems to hover o'er the immense
inane,

And see the suns, like feeble rings of
light,

Orb from the gray, and all the young-
ling globe

A coil of vapour circling like a dream,

Then fixed compact for ever ; the first
beam

Strike on the dark and undivided sea,

And wake the deeps with life. Oh,
mystery

That still dost baffle thought,

Though by all sages sought,

And yet art daily done

With each returning sun,

With every dawn which reddens in the
skies,

With every opening of awakened eyes !

How shall any dare to hold

That the fair world growing old,

Hath spent in vanished time

The glories of its prime ?

Beautiful were the days indeed

Of the Pagan's simple creed,

When all of life was made for girl and
boy,

And all religion was but to enjoy ;

The fair chivalric dream

To some may glorious seem,

When from the sleeping centuries,

Awakened Europe seemed to rise ;

It may be that we cannot know,

In these ripe years, the glory and the
glow

Of those young hours of time, and
careless days,

Borne down too much by knowledge,
and opprest,

To halt a little for the needed rest,

And yield ourselves awhile to joy and
praise ;

Yet every year doth bring

With each recurrence of the genial hour

The infancy of spring,

With store of tender leaf and bursting
flower,

And still to every home

Fresh childish voices come,

And eyes that opened last in Paradise,

And with each rosy dawn

Are night and death withdrawn ;

Another world rises for other eyes ;

Again begins the joy, the stress, the
strife,

Ancient as time itself, and wide as life.

We are the ancients of the world
indeed ;

No more the simple creed,

When every hill and stream and grove

Was filled with shy divinities of love,

Allures us, serving as our King

A Lord of grief and suffering.

Too much our wisdom burdens to
 permit

The fair, thin visions of the past, to flit
 From shade to shade, or float from hill
 to hill.

We are so compassed round by ill,
 That all the music of our lives is
 dumb,

Amid the turbulent waves of sound
 that rise,

The discord born of doubts, and tears,
 and sighs,

Which daily to the listening ear do
 come ;

Nay, oft, confounded by the incessant
 noise

Of vast world-engines, grinding law on
 law,

We lose the godhead that our fathers
 saw,

And all our higher joys,

And bear to plod on daily, deaf and
 blind,

To a dark goal we dare not hope to
 find.

But grows the world then old ?

Nay, all things that are born of time

Spring upwards, and expand from youth
 to prime,

Ripen from flower to fruit,

From song-tide till the days are mute,

Green blade to ear of gold.

But not the less through the eternal
 round

The sleep of winter wakes in days of
 spring,

And not the less the bare and frozen
 ground

Grows blithe with blooms that burst
 and birds that sing.

Nature is deathless ; herb and tree,

Through time that has been and shall be,

Change not, although the outward
 form

Seem now the columned palm

Nourished in zones of calm,

And now the gnarled oak that defies
 the storm.

The cedar's thousand summers are no
 more

To her than are the fleeting petals gay
 Which the young spring, ere March is
 o'er,

Scarce offered, takes away.

Eternal are her works. Unchanging she,
 Alike in short-lived flower and ever-
 changing sea.

We, too, are deathless ; we,

Eternal as the Earth,

We cannot cease to be

While springtide comes or birth.

If our being cease to hold

Reflected lights divine

On budding lives, with every day they
 shine

With unabated gold.

Though lost it may be to our mortal
 sight,

It cannot be that any perish quite—

Only the baser part forgets to be.

And if within the hidden Treasury

Of the great Ruler we awhile should
 rest,

To issue with a higher stamp imprest,

With all our baser alloy purged and
 spent,

Were we not thus content ?

Our thoughts too mighty are

To be within our span of years con-
 fined,

Too deep and wide and far,

The hopes, the fears, that crowd the
 labouring mind,

The sorrows that oppress,
 The sanctities that bless,
 Are vaster than this petty stage of
 things.
 The soaring fancy mounts on careless
 wings
 Beyond the glimmer of the furthest
 star.
 The nightly watcher who with patient
 eye
 Scans the illumined sky,
 Knows when the outward rushing fire
 shall turn,
 And in far ages hence shall brightly burn
 For eyes to-day undreamt of. The
 clear voice
 From Greece or Israel thro' the cen-
 turies heard
 Still bids us tremble or rejoice,
 Stronger than living look or word ;
 The love of home or race,
 Which doth transfigure us, and seems
 to bring
 On every heaven-lit face
 Some shadow of the glory of our King,
 Fades not on earth, nor with our years
 doth end ;
 Nay, even earth's poor physical powers
 transcend
 The narrow bounds of space and time,
 The swift thought by some mystic sym-
 pathy
 Speeding through desert sand, and
 storm-tost sea.
 And shall we hold the range of mind
 Is to our little lives confined ;
 That the pure heart in some blest
 sphere above,
 Loves not which here was set on fire of
 love ;
 The clear eye scans not still, which
 here could scan
 The confines of the Universal plan ;

The seer nor speaks nor thinks his
 thoughts sublime,
 And all of Homer is a speck of lime ?
 Nay, friend, let us forget
 The conflicts of our doubt a little
 while,
 Again our springs shall smile ;
 We shall not perish yet.
 If God so guide our fate,
 The nobler portions of ourselves shall
 last
 Till all the lower rounds of life be past,
 And we, regenerate.
 We too again shall rise,
 The same and not the same,
 As daily rise upon the orient skies
 New dawns with wheels of flame.
 So, if it worthy prove,
 Our being, self-perfected, shall upward
 move
 To higher essence, and still higher
 grown,
 Not sweeping idle harps before a
 throne,
 Nor spending praise where is no need
 of praise,
 But through unnumbered lives and
 ages come
 From pure laborious days,
 To an eternal home,
 Where spring is not, nor birth, nor any
 dawn,
 But life's full noontide never is with-
 drawn.

LOVE TRIUMPHANT.

LOVE took me up, a naked, helpless
 child,
 Love laid me sleeping on the tender
 breast,

Love gazed on me with saintly eyes
and mild,
Love watched me as I lay in happy rest,
Love was my childhood's stay, my
chiefest good,
My daily friend, my solace, and my
food.

But when to Love's own stature I was
come,
Treading the paths where fabled Loves
abound,
Hard by the Cytherean's magic home,
Loveless I paced alone the enchanted
ground.
Some phantoms pale I marked, which
fled away,
And lo, my youth was gone ; my hair
turned gray.

Loveless I lived long time, until I
knew
A thrill since childish hours unknown
before,
My cloistered heart forth to the wicket
flew,
And Love himself was waiting at the
door.
And now, howe'er the treacherous
seasons move,
Love dwells with me again, and I with
Love.

Love folds me round, Love walks with
me, Love takes
My heart and burns it with a holy fire ;
Love lays me on his silver wings, and
makes
My fainting soul to thinner air aspire.
Love of the Source, the Race, the
True, the Right,
This is my sole companion day and
night.

TOLERANCE.

CALL no faith false which e'er has
brought
Relief to any laden life,
Cessation from the pain of thought,
Refreshment 'mid the dust of strife.

What though the thing to which they
kneel
Be dumb and dead as wood or stone,
Though all the rapture which they feel
Be for the worshipper alone ?

They worship, they adore, they bow
Before the Ineffable Source, before
The hidden soul of good ; and thou,
With all thy wit, what dost thou more ?

Kneel with them, only if there come
Some zealot or sleek knave who strives
To mar the sanctities of home,
To tear asunder wedded lives ;

Or who by subtle wile has sought,
By shameful promise, shameful threat,
To turn the thinker from his thought,
To efface the eternal landmarks set,

'Twixt faith and knowledge ; hold not
peace

For such, but like a sudden flame
Let loose thy scorn on him, nor cease
Till thou hast covered him with shame.

A HYMN IN TIME OF IDOLS.

THOUGH they may crowd
Rite upon rite, and mystic song on
song ;

Though the deep organ loud
 Through the long nave reverberate full
 and strong ;
 Though the weird priest,
 Whom rolling clouds of incense half
 conceal,
 By gilded robes increased,
 Mutter and sign, and proudly prostrate
 kneel ;
 Not pomp, nor song, nor bended
 knee
 Shall bring them any nearer Thee.

I would not hold
 Therefore that those who worship still
 where they,
 In dear dead days of old,
 Their distant sires, knelt once and
 passed away,
 May not from carven stone,
 High arching nave and reeded column
 fine,
 And the thin soaring tone
 Of the keen organ catch a breath
 divine,
 Or that the immemorial sense
 Of worship adds not reverence.

But by some bare
 Hill side or plain, or crowded city
 street,
 Wherever purer spirits are,
 Or hearts with love inflamed together
 meet,
 Rude bench and naked wall,
 Humble and sordid to the world-
 dimmed sight,
 On these shall come to fall
 A golden ray of consecrating light,
 And thou within the midst shalt
 there
 Invisible receive the prayer.

In every home,
 Wherever there are loving hearts and
 mild,
 Thou still dost deign to come,
 Clothed with the likeness of a little
 child ;
 Upon the hearth thou still
 Dwellest with them at meat, or work,
 or play ;
 Thou who all space dost fill
 Art with the pure and humble day by
 day ;
 Thou treasurest the tears they weep,
 And watchest o'er them while they
 sleep.

Spirit and Word !
 That still art hid in every faithful heart,
 Indwelling Thought and Lord—
 How should they doubt who know thee
 as thou art ?
 How think to bring thee near
 By magic words, or signs, or any spell,
 Who art among us here,
 Who always in the loving soul dost
 dwell.
 Who art the staff and stay indeed
 Of the weak knees and hands that
 bleed ?

Then let them take
 Their pagan trappings, and their lifeless
 lore ;
 Arise O Lord and make
 A worthy temple where was none
 before.
 Each soul its own best shrine,
 Its priesthood, its sufficient sacrifice,
 Its cleansing fount divine,
 Its hidden store of precious sanctities.
 Those only fit for priestcraft are
 From whom their Lord and King is far.

ON A MODERN PAINTED WINDOW.

TIME was they lifted thee so high
Between the gazer and the sky,
That all the worshipper might see
Was God no more, but only thee.

So high was set thy cross, that they
Who would thy every thought obey,
Saw not thy gracious face, nor heard
More than an echo of thy word.

But now 'tis nearer to the ground,
The weeping women kneel around,
The scoffers sneering by, deride
Thy kingly claims, thy wounded side.

Only two beams of common wood,
And a meek victim bathed in blood,
Rude nails that pierce the tortured
limb,
Mild eyes with agony grown dim.

Aye, but to those who know thee right
Faith strengthens with the nearer sight ;
Love builds a deeper, stronger, creed
On those soft eyes and hands that bleed.

Raised but a little from the rest,
But higher therefore and more blest ;
No more an empty priestly sign,
But the more human, more divine.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT.

THE long day wanes, the broad fields
fade ; the night,
The sweet June night, is like a curtain
drawn.

The dark lanes know no faintest sound,
and white
The pallid hawthorn lights the smooth-
pleached lawn.
The scented earth drinks from the
silent skies
Soft dews, more sweet than softest
harmonies.

There is no stir nor breath of air, the
plains
Lie slumbering in the close embrace of
night,
Only the rustling landrail's note com-
plains ;
The children's casement shows the
half-veiled light,
Only beneath the solemn elm trees tall
The fountain seems to fall and cease to
fall.

No change will come, nor any sound
be made
Thro' the still hours which shall pre-
cede the day ;
Only the bright-eyed stars will slowly
fade,
And a thin vapour rise up cold and
gray,
Then a soft breeze will whisper fresh
and cold,
And up the swift sun hurries red as
gold.

And then another dawn, another link,
To bind the coming to the vanished
day,
Another foot-pace nearer to the brink
Whereon our perilous footsteps hardly
stay,
Another line upon the secular page
Of birth-throes, bridals, sick-beds,
youth and age.

Sweet summer night, than summer
days more fair,
Safe haven of the weary and forlorn,
Splendid the gifts the luminous noon-
tides bear,
Lovely the opening eyelids of the
morn ;
But thou with softest touch trans-
figurest
This toilworn earth into a heaven of
rest.

GOOD IN EVERYTHING.

THE white shafts of the dawn dispel
The night clouds banked across the
sky ;

The sluggish vapours curl and die,
And the day rises. It is well.

Unfold, ye tender blooms of life ;
Sing, birds ; let all the world be
gay :

'Tis well,—the morning of our day
Must rise 'mid joyous songs and strife.

Beat, noonday sun, till all the plain
Swoons, and life seems asleep or
dead :

'Tis well,—the harvest of our bread
Is sown in sorrow and reaped in pain.

Close, evening shadows, soft and deep,
When life reviving breathes once
more ;

Fall, silent night, when toil is o'er,
And the soul folds her wings in sleep.

Come joy or grief, come right or wrong,
In good or evil, life or death ;
We are the creatures of His breath :
Nor shall his hand forsake us long.

THE REPLY.

If I were to answer you
As you would, my soul would soar
Like the lark from earth-born eyes,
Soar and hide in far-off skies,
Soar and come to mortal view
Nevermore.

Whatsoever chance befall,
Of myself I'd die possest.
If they hold a willing mind
Silken threads like steel can bind.
Only to be free is blest—
Free is all.

Press me not, of earth am I ;
Paths there are I dare not tread.
Sweet are fields and flowers, the smile
Of girlhood ; but a little while
Blossoms youth, and overhead
Laughs the sky.

What have we to do with love,—
We for whom the seasons bring
Nothing else than golden hours,
Sun that burns, nor cloud that lowers,
Thro' whose veins the tides of spring
Lightly move ?

But if any pain should come
To o'ercloud your summer, dear,
Pain another's heart may share,
Come and we our fate will dare,—
Come, forgetting doubt and fear,
To your home.

THE TOUCHSTONE.

SAID one, "'Tis Use must lend
The clue our thoughts to bend
To the true end."

Then I. "But can your thought
Reach thus for ages sought,
The eternal 'Ought?' "

"Would not the martyr spurn
The truth you teach, to learn,
Rot, rather,—burn?"

"Were not death's self more sweet
Than to live incomplete
A life effete?"

Then he. "But who shall hold
They grasped not over bold
Their faith of old,"

"Hoarding a random creed
For which they bore to bleed,
Not proved indeed?"

"For who the truth shall seize
Grasps it by slow degrees,
Not snatched, as these."

"And who would save his kind
Must spend, the clue to find,
Not heart, but mind."

Then I. "But mind alone,
Is dead as wood or stone,
Stirs naught and none."

"And who with prying eyes
Will motive analyze,
For him it dies."

"And all his hours remain
A barren, endless plain,
Not joy nor pain:"

"A tideless, windless sea,
A blank eternity,
Still doomed to be."

Then he. "The Use we teach
All forms of being can reach,
Saves all by each."

"No hasty glance or blind,
To passing goods confined,
Changeful as wind;"

"But with a steadfast view,
Piercing the boundless blue
Up to the True."

"Contented to efface
Self, if from out its place
Blossoms the race;"

"If from lives crushed and wrecked,
A perfected effect,
Man stands erect."

"To whom all pleasures show
An aspect mean and low
Beside to know."

"Holding all other thought
Than which for this is sought
A thing of naught."

"This seeking, nothing less,
What broader happiness
Most lives may bless?"

Then I. "If the desire
To which your thoughts aspire
Blazed forth afire;"

"If all the task were done,
All stubborn contests won
Beneath the sun;"

"If hope came not to cheer,
Nor bracing chill of fear,
Sweet sigh nor tear;"

"But all the race should sleep
In a broad calm, too deep
For one to weep."

"And o'er all lands should reign
A dull content inane,
Worse far than pain ;"

"If, all its griefs forgot,
Slowly the race should rot,
Fade and be not ;"

"Would not the thought oppress
The dream that once could bless,
With such distress,"

"That, from the too great strain,
Life withered, heart and brain,
Would rise in vain ?"

Then he. "The outcome this
Of all philosophies,
'Who seeks shall miss,'"

"Who toil aright, for those
Life's pathway, ere it close,
Is as the rose."

"The spires of wisdom stand,
Piled by the unconscious hand,
From grains of sand."

"And pleasure comes unsought,
To those who take but thought
For that, they ought ;"

"A bloom, a perfume rare,
A deep-hid jewel fair
For those who dare."

"So who the race aright
Loveth, a clearer sight
Shall yet requite ;"

"And, since he seeks it less,
An unsought happiness
His toil shall bless."

Then I. "'Twere strange indeed
Should not our longing need
A clearer creed."

"If only this were blest,
To ponder well how best
To serve the rest."

"Since grows ; 'tis understood,
The happy multitude,
From each man's good,"

"From general sacrifice,
How should for each arise,
Content for sighs ?"

"Or shall we deem it true
That who the road pursue
To gain the True,"

"May not the summit gain
By paths direct and plain
To heart and brain,"

"But with averted mind,
And sedulously blind,
The end must find ?"

"Is truth a masker, then,
Rejoiced to mock the ken
Of toiling men ?"

"Now tricked as Use, now Right,
But always in despite
Of our poor sight."

"Doth it not rather seem
We live, whate'er we deem,
As in a dream,"

"Acting, but acting still
The dictates to fulfil
Of a sure Will,"

"Seeing in Use and Right,
Twin rays indefinite
Of a great Light,"

"A mystic Sun and clear,
Which through mind's atmosphere
Can scarce appear,"

"But which not less we know ;
In all fair flowers that grow,
Loud storms that blow,"

"In noble thought and word,
In aspirations heard,
When hearts are stirred,"

"In every breathing breath,
Life that awakeneth,
Life that is death,"

"Whether serene it shine
Or clouds our view confine,
Wondrous, Divine?"

Then he. "Shall this excuse
Him who a dream should choose
Rather than Use,"

"That he prefer to hold
Some dark abstraction old,
Remote and cold,"

"Some thin ghost, fancy-dressed,
Whereby men's souls oppressed,
Forfeit the best,"

"And for a dream neglect
What splendours of effect
Their lives had decked?"

Then I. "Though mind and brain
Wither and are in vain,
And thought a pain;"

"Though sorrow, like a thief,
Follow to rob belief,
And faith be grief;"

"Though my obedience show
No fruit I here may know
Save utter woe;"

"Though health and strength decay ;
Yea, though the Truth shall slay,
I will obey."

NOTHING LOST.

WHERE are last year's snows,
Where the summer's rose,—
Who is there who knows?

Or the glorious note
Of some singer's throat,
Heard in years remote?

Or the love they bore
Who, in days of yore,
Loved, but are no more?

Or the faiths men knew
When, before mind grew,
All strange things seemed true?

* * *

The snows are sweet spring rain,
The dead rose blooms again,
Young voices keep the strain.

The old affection mild
Still springs up undefiled
For love, and friend, and child.

The old faiths grown more wide,
Purer and glorified,
Are still our lifelong guide.

Nothing that once has been,
Tho' ages roll between
And it be no more seen,

Can perish, for the Will
Which doth our being fulfil,
Sustains and keeps it still.

THE HIDDEN SELF.

I KNOW not if a keener smart
Can come to finer souls than his
Who hears men praise him, mind or
heart,
For something higher than he is.

Who fain would say, "Behold me,
friends,
That which I am, not what you deem,
A thing of low and narrow ends,
Sordid, not golden as I seem.

See here the hidden blot of shame,
The weak thought that you take for
strong,
The brain too dull to merit fame,
The faint and imitative song."

But dares not, lest discovery foul
Not his name only, but degrade
Heights closed but to the soaring soul,
Names which scorn trembles to in-
vade ;

And doth his inner self conceal
From all men in his own despite,
Hiding what he would fain reveal,
And a most innocent hypocrite.

MARCHING.

ONCE, and once again,
From the thick crowd of men,
Loud toil and high endeavour,
There comes a secret sound,
Where the thinkers stand around,
And sometimes 'tis "For ever,"
Sometimes "Never."

Always that ceaseless throng
Has filed those paths along,
Those painful hills ascended ;
Thro' fair meads of success,
Thro' barren sands they press,
Defeats and triumphs splendid,
Till 'tis ended.

The glory and the shame
Different, and yet the same
The efforts and the aspirations,
Unlike in mien and speech,
Pressed onwards each on each,
Go the endless alternations
Of the nations.

And the rhythm of their feet,
The ineffable low beat
Of those vast throngs pacing slowly,
Floats on the sea of Time
Like a musical low chime
From a far isle, mystic, holy,
Tolling slowly.

And from the endless column
Goes up that strange rhyme solemn
Of thoughts which naught shall sever,
The contrast sad and sweet,
Of opposite streams which meet ;
Sometimes the glad "For ever,"
Sometimes "Never."

COURAGE!

THERE are who, bending supple knees,
Live for no end except to please,
Rising to fame by mean degrees ;
But creep not thou with these.

They have their due reward ; they bend
Their lives to an unworthy end—
On empty aims the toil expend
Which had secured a friend.

But be not thou as these, whose mind
Is to the passing hour confined ;
Let no ignoble fetters bind
Thy soul, as free as wind.

Stand upright, speak thy thought, de-
clare
The truth thou hast that all may
share ;
Be bold, proclaim it everywhere :
They only live who dare.

*GILBERT BECKETT AND THE
FAIR SARACEN.*

THE last crusader's helm had gleamed
Upon the yellow Syrian shore ;
No more the war-worn standards
streamed,
The stout knights charged and fell
no more ;
No more the Paynim grew afraid—
The crescent floated o'er the cross.
But to one simple Heathen maid
Her country's gain was bitter loss ;

For love, which knows not race or creed,
Had bound her with its subtle
chain,—

Love, which still makes young hearts
to bleed,

For this one, mingled joy with pain,
And left for one brief hour of bliss,
One little span of hopes and fears,
The memory of a parting kiss,
And what poor solace comes of tears.

A lowly English squire was he,
A prisoner chained, enslaved, and
sold ;

A lady she of high degree.

'Tis an old tale and often told :
'Twas pity bade the brown cheek glow,
'Twas love and pity drew the sigh,
'Twas love that made the soft tear flow,
The sweet sad night she bade him fly.

Far from the scorching Syrian plain
The brave ship bears the Saxon home ;
Once more to mists and rains again,
And verdant English lawns, they come.
I know not if as now 'twas then,
Or if the growing ages move
The careless, changeful hearts of men
More slowly to the thoughts of love ;

But woman's heart was then, as now,
Tender and passionate and true.
Think, gentle ladies, ye who know
Love's power, what pain that poor
heart knew ;
How, living always o'er again
The sweet short past, she knew, too
late,
'Twas love had bound the captive's
chain,
Which broken, left her desolate.

Till by degrees the full young cheek
Grew hollow, and the liquid eyes
Still gazing seaward, large and meek,
Took something of a sad surprise ;

As one who learns, with a strange chill,
 'Mid youth and wealth's unclouded
 day,
 Of sad lives full of pain and ill,
 And thinks, "And am I too as
 they?"

And by degrees most hateful grew
 All things that once she held so
 dear—
 The feathery palms, the cloudless blue,
 Tall mosque and loud muezzin clear,
 The knights who flashed by blinded
 street,
 The lattice lit by laughing eyes,
 The songs around the fountain, sweet
 To maidens under Eastern skies.

And oft at eve, when young girls told
 Tales precious to the girlish heart,
 She sat alone, and loved to hold
 Communion with her soul apart.
 Till at the last, too great became
 The hidden weight of secret care,
 And girlish fears and maiden shame
 Were gone, and only love was there.

And so she fled. I see her still
 In fancy, desolate, alone,
 Wander by arid plain and hill,
 From early dawn till day was done;
 Sun-stricken, hungry, thirsty, faint,
 By perilous paths I see her move,
 Clothed round with pureness like a
 saint,
 And fearless in the might of love.

Till lo! a gleam of azure sea,
 And rude ships moored upon the
 shore.
 Strange, yet not wholly strange, for he
 Had dared those mystic depths
 before.

And some good English seaman bold,
 Remembering those he left at home,
 Put gently back the offered gold,
 And for love's honour bade her come.

And then they sailed. No pirate bark
 Swooped on them, for the Power of
 Love
 Watched o'er that precious wandering
 ark,
 And this his tender little dove.
 I see those stalwart scamen still
 Gaze wondering on that childish form,
 And shelter her from harm and ill,
 And guide her safe through wave
 and storm.

Till under grayer skies a gleam
 Of white, and taking land she went,
 Following our broad imperial stream,
 Or rose-hung lanes of smiling Kent.
 Friendless I see her, lonely, weak,
 Thro' fields where every flower was
 strange,
 Go forth without a word to speak,
 By burgh and thorp and moated
 grange.

For all that Love himself could teach
 This passionate pilgrim to our shore,
 Were but two words of Saxon speech,
 Two little words and nothing more—
 "Gilbert" and "London"; like a
 flame
 To her sweet lips these sounds would
 come,
 The syllables of her lover's name,
 And the far city of his home.

I see her cool her weary feet
 In dewy depths of crested grass;
 By clear brooks fringed with meadow-
 sweet,
 And daisied meads, I see her pass;

I see her innocent girlish glee,
 I see the doubts which on her crowd,
 O'erjoyed with bird, or flower, or tree,
 Despondent for the fleeting cloud.

I see her passing slow, alone,
 By burgh and thorp and moated
 grange,
 Still murmuring softly like a moan
 Those two brief words in accents
 strange.
 Sometimes would pass a belted earl
 With squires behind in brave array ;
 Sometimes some honest, toilworn churl
 Would fare with her till close of day.

The saintly abbess, sweet and sage,
 Would wonder as she ambled by,
 Or white-plumed knight or long-haired
 page
 Ride by her with inquiring eye.
 The friar would cross himself, and say
 His paternosters o'er and o'er ;
 The gay dames whisper Welladay !
 And pity her and nothing more.

But tender women, knowing love
 And all the pain of loneliness,
 Would feel a sweet compassion move,
 And welcome her to rest and food,
 And walk with her beyond the hill,
 And kiss her cheek when she must go ;
 And "Gilbert" she would murmur still,
 And "London" she would whisper
 low.

And sometimes sottish boors would rise
 From wayside tavern, where they
 sate,
 And leer from heated vinous eyes,
 And stagger forth with reeling gait,

And from that strong unswerving will
 And clear gaze shrink as from a
 blow ;
 And "Gilbert" she would murmur still,
 And "London" she would whisper
 low.

Then by the broad suburban street,
 And city groups that outward stray
 To take the evening, and the sweet
 Faint breathings of the dying day—
 The gay young 'prentice, lithe and slim,
 The wimpled maid, demurely shy,
 The merchant somewhat grave and
 prim,
 The courtier with his rolling eye.

And more and more the growing crowd
 Would gather, wondering whence she
 came
 And why, with boorish laughter loud,
 And jeers which burnt her cheek
 with flame.
 For potent charm to save from ill
 But one word she made answer now :
 For "Gilbert" she would murmur still,
 And "Gilbert" she would whisper
 low.

Till some good pitiful soul—not then
 Our London was as now o'ergrown—
 Pressed through the idle throng of men,
 And led her to his home alone,
 And signing to her he would find
 Him whom she sought, went forth
 again
 And left her there with heart and mind
 Distracted by a new-born pain.

For surely then, when doubt was o'er,
 A doubt before a stranger came,
 "He loved me not, or loves no more."
 Oh, virgin pride ! oh, maiden shame !

Almost she fled, almost the past
Seemed better than the pain she
knew ;

Her veil around her face she cast :
Then the gate swung—and he was
true.

Poor child ! they christened her, and so
She had her wish. Ah, yearning
heart,

Was love so sweet then ? would you
know

Again the longing and the smart ?
Came there no wintry hours when you
Longed for your native skies again,
The creed, the tongue your girlhood
knew,

Aye, even the longing and the pain ?

Peace ! Love is Lord of all. But I,
Seeing her fierce son's mitred tomb,
Conjoin with fancy's dreaming eye
This love tale, and that dreadful
doom.

Sped hither by a hidden will,
O'er sea and land I watch her go ;
"Gilbert" I hear her murmur still,
And "London" still she whispers
low.

TO A CHILD OF FANCY.

THE nests are in the hedgerows,
The lambs are on the grass ;
With laughter sweet as music
Thy hours lightfooted pass,
My darling child of fancy,
My winsome prattling lass.

Blue eyes, with long brown lashes,
Thickets of golden curl,
Red little lips disclosing
Twin rows of fairy pearl,

Cheeks like the apple blossom,
Voice lightsome as the merle.

A whole Spring's fickle changes
In every short-lived day,
A passing cloud of April,
A flowery smile of May,
A thousand quick mutations
From graver moods to gay.

Far off, I see the season
When thy childhood's course is run,
And thy girlhood opens wider
Beneath the growing sun,
And the rose begins to redden,
But the violets are done.

And further still the summer,
When thy fair tree, fully grown,
Shall burgeon, and grow splendid
With blossoms of its own,
And the fruit begins to gather,
But the buttercups are mown.

If I should see thy autumn,
'Twill not be close at hand,
But with a spirit vision,
From some far distant land.
Or, perhaps, I hence may see thee
Amongst the angels stand.

I know not what of fortune
The future holds for thee,
Nor if skies fair or clouded
Wait thee in days to be,
But neither joy nor sorrow
Shall sever thee from me.

Dear child, whatever changes
Across our lives may pass,
I shall see thee still for ever,
Clearly as in a glass,
The same sweet child of fancy,
The same dear winsome lass.

A CYNIC'S DAY-DREAM.

SOME men there be who can descry
 No charm in earth or sea or sky,
 Poor painful bigot souls, to whom
 All sights and sounds recall the tomb,
 And some who do not fear to use
 God's world for tavern or for stews.
 Some think it wisdom to despoil
 Their years for gold and troublous toil ;
 While others with cold dreams of art
 Would feed the hunger of the heart,
 And dilettanti dare to stand,
 Eternities on either hand !

But with no one of these shall I
 Make choice to live my life or die,—
 Rather let me elect to give
 What span of life is mine to live,
 To honest labour, daily sought,
 Crowned with the meed of patient
 thought ;

To precious friends for ages dead,
 But loved where'er their words are
 read ;

To others living with us still,
 Who sway the nation's mind and will
 By eloquent pen or burning word,
 Where hearts 'are fired and souls are
 stirred.

So thro' the tranquil evenings long,
 Let us awake our souls with song,
 Such song as comes where no words
 come,

And is most mighty when most dumb.
 Then soar awhile on wings of art ;
 Not that which chokes the vulgar mart,
 But subtle hints and fancies fine,
 When least completed most divine,—
 Sun-copies of some perfect thought,
 Thro' bronze or canvas fitly wrought,
 Known when in youth 'twas ours to see
 Thy treasure-houses, Italy !

Then turn from these to grave debate
 What change of laws befits the State,
 By what wise schemes and precepts best
 To raise the humble and oppressed,
 And slay the twin reproach of Time,
 The fiends of Ignorance and Crime.

Or what if I might come to fill
 A calmer part, and dearer still,
 With one attempered soul to share
 The joys and ills 'tis ours to bear ;
 To grow together, heart with heart,
 Into a whole where each is part ;
 To blend together, soul with soul,
 Neither a part, but each the whole ;
 With strange creative thrills to teach
 The dawning mind, the growing speech,
 To bind around me precious bands
 Of loving hearts and childish hands,
 And lose the stains of time and sense
 In those clear deeps of innocence ?

So if kind fate should grant at length,
 Ere frame and brain have lost their
 strength,

In my own country homestead dear,
 To spend a portion of the year ;
 What joys I'll prove if modest wealth
 Should come with still unbroken health !
 There, sheltered from the ruder wind,
 Thro' the thick woods we'll range, to
 find

The spring's first flower, the autumn's
 fruit,

Strange fungus or misshapen root.
 Mark where the wood-quist or the
 thrush

Builds on tall pine or hazel bush ;
 See the brave bird with speckled breast
 Brood fearless on the teeming nest,
 And bid the little hands refrain
 From every act of wrong and pain.

Observe the gossip conies sit
 By their own doors, the white owl flit
 Thro' the dim fields, while I enjoy
 The wondering talk of girl or boy.
 Sweet souls, which at life's portal
 stand,
 And all within, a wonderland—
 Oh, treasure of a guileless love,
 Fit prelude of the joys above !

There, when the swift week nears its
 end,

To greet the welcome Sunday friend,
 Through the still fields we'll wend our
 way,

To meet the guest at close of day.
 And then, when little eyes in vain
 Long time have sought the coming
 train,

A gradual distant sound, which fills
 The bosom of the folded hills,
 Till with white steam or ruddy light
 The wayworn convoy leaps to sight,
 Then stops and sets the traveller down,
 Bringing the smoke and news of town.
 And then the happy hours to come,
 The walk or ride which leads us home,
 Past the tall woods through which
 'twould seem

Home's white walls hospitably gleam,—
 The well-served meal, the neighbour
 guest,

The rosy darlings curled and dressed ;
 And, when the house grows silent, then
 The lengthened talk on books and
 men ;

And on the Sunday morning still,
 The pleasant stroll by wood-crowned
 hill

To church, wherein my eyes grow dim
 Hearing my children chant the hymn ;
 And seeing in their earnest look
 Something of innocent rebuke,

I lose the old doubt's endless pain,
 And am a little child again.

If fate should grant me such a home,
 So sweet the tranquil days would come,
 I should not need, I trust, to sink
 My weariness in lust or drink.
 Scant pleasure should I think to gain
 From endless scenes of death and pain ;
 'Twould little profit me to slay
 A thousand innocents a day ;
 I should not much delight to tear
 With wolfish dogs the shrieking hare ;
 With horse and hound to track to
 death

A helpless wretch that gasps for breath ;
 To make the fair bird check its wing,
 And drop, a dying, shapeless thing ;
 To leave the joy of all the wood
 A mangled heap of fur and blood,
 Or else escaping, but in vain,
 To pine, a shattered wretch, in pain ;
 Teeming, perhaps, or doomed to see
 Its young brood starve in misery ;
 With neither risk nor labour, still
 To live for nothing but to kill—
 I dare not ! If perplexed I am
 Between the tiger and the lamb ;
 If fate ordain that these shall give
 Their poor brief lives that I may live :
 Whate'er the law that bids them die,
 Others shall butcher them, not I,—
 Not such my work. Surely the Lord,
 Who made the devils by a word,
 Not men, but those who'd wield them
 well

Gave these sad tortures of his Hell.

Ah ! fool and blind, to wander so ;
 Who hast lived long enough to know
 With what insane confusions teem
 The mazes of our waking dream,—

The dullard surfeited with gold
His bloated coffers fail to hold,
While the keen mind and generous
brain

From penury aspire in vain ;
Love's choicest treasures flung away
On some vile lump of coarsest clay ;
Pure girlhood chained to wretches foul,
Tainted in body as in soul ;
The precious love of wife or child
Not for the loving heart and mild,
But for the sullen churl, who ne'er
Knew any rule but that of fear ;
Fame, like Titania, stooping down
To set on asses' ears a crown ;
The shallow dunce, the fluent fool,
The butt and laughter of the school,
By fortune's strange caprice grown
great,

A light of forum or debate ;
The carnal lump devoid of grace,
With each bad passion in his face,
A saintly idol, round whose knees
Crowd throngs of burning devotees.

Great heaven ! how strange the tangle is,
What old perplexity is this ?
The very words of my complaint,
What else are they than echoes faint
Of the full fire, the passionate scorn,
Of high-souled singers and forlorn,
Who, in our younger England, knew
No care for aught but what was true,
But loved to lash with bitter hate
The shameless vices of the great ;
Who bade, in far-off days of Rome,
In verse their indignation come ;
Who, when we learn the secrets hid
Beneath the eldest Pyramid,
Or in those dim days further still,
Whose nameless ruin builds the hill,
Push back our search where'er we can,
Till first the ape became the man,

Will in rude satire bid us find
The earliest victories of mind ?
Strong souls, rebellious with their lot,
Who longed for right and found it not ;
Too strong to take things as they seem,
Too weak to comprehend the scheme,
Too deeply fired with honest trust
To dream that God might be unjust ;
Yet, seeing how unequal show
His providences here below,
By paradoxes girt about,
Grew thro' excess of faith to doubt.
Oh, faithful souls, who love the true,
Tho' all be false, yet will not you ;
Tho' wrong shall overcome the right,
Still is it hateful in your sight ;
Tho' sorely tempted, you, and tried,
The truth stands always at your side ;
Tho' falsehood wear her blandest smile,
You only she shall ne'er beguile ;
For you, 'mid spectral sights and shows,
Life blushes with a hidden rose ;
Thro' the loud din of lower things
You hear the sweep of angel wings,
And with a holy scorn possess,
Wait till these clamours sink to rest.

TO A LOST LOVE.

COLD snowdrops which the shrinking
new-born year
Sends like the dove from out the
storm-tost ark ;
Sweet violets which may not tarry here
Beyond the earliest flutings of the
lark ;
Bright celandines which gild the tufted
brake
Before the speckled thrush her nest
has made ;

Fair frail anemones which star-like shake
And twinkle by each sunny bank and
glade ;

Pale primroses wherewith the virgin
spring,

As with a garland, wreathes her
comely head ;

No eyes have I for you, nor voice to
sing.

My love is dead !

For she was young and pure and white
as you,

And fairer and more sweet, and ah !
as frail.

I dare not give to her the honour due,
Lest, for a strain so high, my voice
should fail.

Like you, she knew the springtide's
changeeful hours ;

Like you, she blossomed ere the
coming leaf ;

Like you, she knew not summer's teem-
ing showers ;

Like you, as comely, and, alas ! as
brief.

You may not see the roses, nor might
she ;

Such swift short beauty is its only
fruit ;

So a sweet silence is her eulogy,
And praise is mute.

IN MEMORY OF A FRIEND.*

BENEATH the feathery fronds of palm
The white stone of a double grave,
And on the horizon, blue and calm,
The tropic ocean wave.

* Ernest Schachl, Attorney-General for
Jamaica, who, with his only sister, died of
yellow fever in February, 1874.

'Twas three years since, no more, that
thou,

Dear friend, with us, in daily round,
Didst labour where we labour now,
'Mid London's surge of sound.

Treading the dull slow paths of law,
With little of reward or gain,
To feel a high ambition gnaw
Thy heart with tooth of pain,

And mark with scant content the crowd
Fulfil the immemorial rule
Which drives the fool with plaudits
loud
To glorify the fool.

And so with patient scorn didst gain
To winnow from the growing heap
Of barren precedent the grain
Which hides there buried deep.

Till last, congenial labour came,
To call thee o'er the tropic sea,
And exile, gilt by toil and fame,
Severed thy friends from thee.

Brief as we hoped, but ah, how long !
Though lit by news of days well spent,
Of rights defined, of law made strong,
Of rebels grown content,

Of ordered codes so reasoned out,
Speaking with voice so true and clear,
That none who hear them still may
doubt

" 'Tis Justice speaketh here."

Yet not the less thou barest part
In the old talk we loved before ;
The newest growths of thought or art
Delighted more and more,

And all the marvels of thy isle,
The lavish wealth of sea and land,
The skies with their too constant smile,
Loud surf on breathless strand,

The shallow nature fierce, yet gay,
Of our dark brethren ; thou didst learn,
Noting—but gazing, far away,
With eyes that still would yearn,

For that fair time when, toil being
done,

The happy day at length should come,
When with our kindly autumn sun
Thou should'st revisit home.

* * * *

It was this very year ; and then
The plague, which long time, dealing
death,

Had vexed the shores of kindred men,
On those breathed deadly breath.

And one, I know not who, their guest,
Sickening, Love drew them forth to
tend,

Careless of needful food and rest,
Their fever-stricken friend,

Who owed to them life's refulgent
power ;

While for those duteous martyrs twain,
Brother and Sister, one blest hour
Brought one release from pain.

Too generous natures ! kindred souls !—
And now, round those twin tombs the
wave,

Forgetful of their story, rolls,
And the palms shade their grave.

* * * *

And we—what shall we say of thee ?—
Thou hast thy due reward, oh, friend—
We serve a High Necessity,
To an Invisible End.

That waste nor halting comes at all
In all the scheme is all we know ;
The force was formed that bade thee
fall,
Millions of years ago.

The clouds of circumstance unite,
The winds of fate together roll ;
They meet ; there bursts a sudden light,
And consecrates a soul !

IT SHALL BE WELL.

If thou shalt be in heart a child,
Forgiving, tender, meek, and mild,
Though with light stains of earth
defiled,
Oh, soul, it shall be well.

It shall be well with thee indeed,
Whate'er thy race, thy tongue, thy
creed ;
Thou shalt not lose thy fitting meed.
It shall be surely well.

Not where, nor how, nor when we
know,
Nor by what stages thou shalt grow ;
We may but whisper faint and low,
“It shall be surely well.”

It shall be well with thee, oh, soul,
Tho' the heavens wither like a scroll ;
Tho' sun and moon forget to roll,
Oh, soul, it shall be well.

A REMONSTRANCE.

If ever, for a passing day,
My careless rhymes shall gain to please,
I would that those who read may say,
“Left he no more than these?”

For sure it is a piteous thing
That those blest souls to whom is given
The instinct and the power to sing,
The choicest gift of heaven,

Not from high peak to peak alone
Our faithful footsteps care to guide,
But oft by plains of sand and stone,
Dull wastes, and naught beside.

Who the low crawling verse prolong,
Careless alike of fame and time ;
The form, but not the soul of song—
A dreary hum of rhyme.

A straight road, by a stagnant stream,
Where the winged steed, which late
would soar
From the white summits like a dream,
Creeps slowly evermore.

A babble of sound, like that flat noise
Which, when the harmonies grow
dumb,
Between the symphony's awful joys,
Too oft is heard to come.

Grave error ; since not all of life
Is rhythmic ; oft by level ways
We walk ; the sweet creative strife,
The inspired heroic days,

Are rare for all,—no food for song,
Are common hours ; and those who
hold
The gift, the inspiration strong,
More precious far than gold,

Only when heart is fired and brain,
And the soul spreads its soaring wing,
Only when nobler themes constrain,
Should ever dare to sing.

THIRD SERIES (1875).

SONG.

TELL me where I may quench the too
fierce fire
Of hope and of desire ;
Tell me how I may from my soul remove
The sting and pain of love ;
Tell me, and I will give to thee,
Magician, my whole soul in fee.

And yet I know not what of fit reward,
For enterprise so hard,
I might convey thee in a loveless soul,
Whose currents no more roll : —
A corpse, corruptible and cold,
Were no great prize to have and hold.

Time only is it that will deign to take
Such things for their own sake,

Preferring age to youth, grey hairs to
brown,
And to bright smiles the frown.
Time takes the hope, Time dulls the
smart,
And first makes slow, then stops the
heart.

Wherefore to Time I will address my
song.
Time, equable and strong,
Take thou all hope and longing clean
away—
And yet I prithee stay ;
Forbear, for rather I would be
Consumed than turn to ice with
thee.

THE HOME ALTAR.

WHY should we seek at all to gain
 By vigils, and in pain,
 By lonely life and empty heart,
 To set a soul apart
 Within a cloistered cell,
 For whom the precious, homely hearth
 would serve as well ?

There, with the early breaking
 morn,
 Ere quite the day is born,
 The lustral waters flow serene,
 And each again grows clean ;
 From sleep, as from a tomb,
 Born to another dawn of joy, and hope,
 and doom.

There through the sweet and toil-
 some day,
 To labour is to pray ;
 There love with kindly beaming
 eyes
 Prepares the sacrifice ;
 And voice and innocent smile
 Of childhood do our cheerful liturgies
 beguile.

There, at his chaste and frugal
 feast,
 Love sitteth as a Priest ;
 And with mild eyes and mien
 sedate,
 His deacons stand and wait ;
 And round the holy table
 Paten and chalice range in order
 serviceable.

And when ere night, the vespers
 said,
 Low lies each weary head,

What giveth He who gives them
 sleep,
 But a brief death less deep ?
 Or what the fair dreams given
 But ours who, daily dying, dream a
 happier heaven ?

Then not within a cloistered wall
 Will we expend our days ;
 But dawns that break and eves
 that fall
 Shall bring their dues of praise.
 This best befits a Ruler always
 near,
 This duteous worship mild, and reason-
 able fear.

THE VOYAGE.

WHO climbs the Equatorial main
 Drives on long time through mist and
 cloud,
 Through zones of storm, through thun-
 ders loud,
 For many a night of fear and pain.

Till one night all is clear, and lo !
 He sees with wondering, awe-struck
 eyes,

In depths above, in depths below,
 Strange constellations light the skies—

New stars, more splendid and more fair,
 Yet not without a secret loss :
 He seeks in vain the Northern Bear,
 And finds instead the Southern Cross.

Yet dawns the self-same sun—the same
 The deep below the keel which lies ;
 Though this may burn with brighter
 flame,
 And that respond to bluer skies,

The self-same earth, the self-same sky :
And though through clouds and tem-
pests driven,

The self-same seeker lifts an eye
That sees another side of heaven.

No change in man, or earth, or aught,
Save those strange secrets of the night ;
Nor there, save that another thought
Has reached them through another sight,

Which may but know one hemisphere,
The earth's mass blotting out the blue,
Till one day, leaving shadows here,
It sees all heaven before its view.

THE FOOD OF SONG.

How best doth vision come
To the poet's mind,—
Lonely beneath the blue, unclouded
dome,

Or battling with the mighty ocean-wind ;
In fair spring mornings, with the soar-
ing lark,

Or amid roaring midnight forests dark ?

Shall he attune his voice
To sweetest song,
When earth and sea and sky alike
rejoice,
And men are blest, and think no
thought of wrong,
In some ideal heaven, some happy isle,
Where life is stiffened to a changeless
smile ?

Or best amid the noise
Of high designs,
Loud onsets, shatterings, awful battle
joys,
Wherefor the loftier spirit longs and
pines ;

Or by the depths of Thought's un-
fathomed sea ;
Or to loud thunders of the Dawn to be ?

Nature is less than naught
In smile or frown,
But for the formless, underlying thought
Of mind and purpose greater than our
own ;
This only can these empty shows
inform,
Smiles through the calm, and animates
the storm.

Nor 'mid the clang and rush
Of mightier thought,
The steep, the snows, the gulfs, that
whelm and crush
The seeker with the treasure he has
sought ;
Too vast, too swift, too formless to
inspire
The fictive hand, or touch the lips with
fire.

Rather amid the throng
Of toiling men
He finds the food and sustenance of
song,
Spread by hidden hands, again, and
yet again,
Where'er he goes, by crowded city
street,
He fares thro' springing fancies sad
and sweet—

Some innocent baby smile ;
A close-wound waist ;
Fathers and children ; things of shame
and guile ;
Dim eyes, and lips at parting kissed in
haste ;

The halt, the blind, the prosperous
thing of ill ;
The thief, the wanton, touch and vex
him still.

Or if sometimes he turn
With a new thrill,
And strives to paint anew with words
that burn
The inner thought of sea, or sky, or
hill :

It is because a breath of human life
Has touched them : joy and suffering,
rest and strife.

And he sees mysteries
Above, around,
Fair spiritual fleeting agencies
Haunting each foot of consecrated
ground :
And so, these fading, raises bolder eyes
Beyond the furthest limits of the skies,

And every thought and word,
And all things seen,
And every passion which his heart has
stirred,
And every joy and sorrow which has
been,
And every step of life his feet have
trod,
Lead by broad stairs of glory up to
God.

THE YOUTH OF THOUGHT.

Oh happy days ! oh joyous time !
When thought was gay and man was
young,
And to a golden flow of rhyme,
Life like a melody was sung ;

When, in the springtime of the earth,
The cloud-capt hill, the dewy grove,
Clear lake and rippling stream gave
birth
To shy Divinities of love ;

When often to the jovial feast
Of love or wine the people came,
And Nature was the only priest,
And Youth and Pleasure knew not
shame.

Nor darker shape of wrong or ill
The fearful fancy might inspire,
Than vine-crowned on some shady hill,
The Satyr nursing quaint desire.

And if some blooming youth or maid
In depths of wood or stream were
lost,
Some love-lorn Deity, 'twas said,
The blissful truant's path had crossed.

Sweet time of fancy, giving place
To times of thinking scarce less
blest,
When Wisdom wore a smiling face,
And Knowledge was like Fancy
drest,

And Art with Language lived ingrown,
The cunning hand and golden
tongue :
By this the form Divine was shown,
By that its deathless praises sung.

When in cool temples fair and white,
By purple sea, or myrtle shade,
The gods took shape to mortal sight,
By their own creatures' hands re-
made.

And daily, to the cheerful noise
Of wrestling, or the panting race—
Mid the clear laughter of the boys,
And tender forms of youthful grace—

Grave sages walked in high debate
Beneath the laurel grove, and sought
To solve the mysteries of Fate,
And sound the lowest deeps of
Thought ;

Nor knew that they, as those indeed,
Were naked, taking fair for right ;
With beauty only for all creed,
Yet not without some heaven-sent
light.

Now preaching clear the deathless
soul ;
Now winging love from sloughs of
shame ;
And oft from earthly vapours foul,
Soaring aloft with tongues of flame.

Knew they no inward voice to vex
The careless joyance of their way—
No pointing finger stern, which checks
The sad transgressor of to-day ?

Fair dream, if any dream be fair,
Which knows no fuller life than
thine ;
Which only moves through earthly air,
And builds on shadows half divine ;

How art thou fled ! For us no more
Dryad or Satyr haunts the grove ;
No Nereid sports upon the shore,
Nor with wreathed horn the Tritons
rove ;

Who breathe a fuller, graver air,
Long since to manhood's stature
grown ;

Who leave our childhood's fancies fair,
For pains and pleasures of our own.

For us no more the young vine climbs,
Its gadding tendrils flinging down ;
Who move in sadder, wiser times,
Whose thorns are woven for a
crown.

The lily and the passion-flower
Preach a new tale of gain and loss,
And in the wood-nymph's closest bower
The springing branches form the
Cross.

"A great hope traversing the earth,"
Has taken all the young world's
bloom,
And for the joy and flush of birth,
Has left the solemn thought of
doom ;

And made the body no more divine,
And built our Heaven no longer
here,
And given for joyous fancies fine,
Souls bowed with holy awe and fear.

And far beyond the suns, removed
The godhead seen by younger eyes,
Leaving the people once beloved,
Girt round by dreadful mysteries ;

Fulfilled with thoughts, more fair and
dear
Than all the lighter joys of yore,
Immeasurable hopes brought near,
And Heaven laid open more and
more.

But not with love and peace alone
Time came, which older joys could
take ;

But with fierce brand and hopeless
groan,
Red war, the dungeon, and the
stake ;

And lives by Heaven too much oppress,
And cloisters dim with tears and
sighs,
And young hearts withered in the
breast,
And fasts and stripes and agonies ;

And for Apollo breathing strength,
And Aphrodité warm with life ;
A tortured Martyr come at length,
To the last pang of lifelong strife.

While round us daily move no more
Those perfect forms of youthful
grace,
No more men worship as before
The rounded limb, the clear-cut face ;

Who see the dwarfed mechanic creep,
With hollow cheek, and lungs that
bleed,
Or the swart savage fathom-deep,
Who comes to air, to sleep, and
breed.

Aye, but by loom, or forge, or mine,
Or squalid hut, there breaks for these
Hope more immense, awe more divine
Than ever dawned on Sokrates.

Who if they seek to live again
In careless lives the pagan charm,
May only prove a lifelong pain,
For that clear conscience void of
harm.

For in the manhood of God's days
We live, and not in careless youth ;

The essence more than form we praise,
And Beauty moves us less than
Truth.

From youth to age ; till cycles hence
Another and a higher Spring,
And with a truer innocence,
Again the world shall think and sing.

SONG.

I WOULD thou might'st not vex me
with thine eyes,
Thou fair Ideal Beauty, nor would'st
shame
All lower thoughts and visions as they
rise,
As in mid-noon a flame.

For now thy presence leaves no prospect
fair,
Nor joy in act, nor charm in any
maid,
Nor end to be desired, for which men
dare,
Thou making me afraid.

Because life seems through thee a thing
too great
To spend on these, which else might
grow to thee ;
So that fast bound, I idly hesitate ;
I prithee set me free ;

Or, hold me, if thou wilt, but come
not near,
Let me pursue thee still in ghostly
grace ;
Far off let me pursue thee, for I fear
To faint before thy face.

AT CHAMBERS.

To the chamber, where now uncaring
 I sit apart from the strife,
 While the fool and the knave are sharing
 The pleasures and profits of life,

There came a faint knock at the door,
 Not long since on a terrible day ;
 One faint little knock, and no more ;
 And I brushed the loose papers away.

And as no one made answer, I rose,
 With quick step and impatience of
 look,
 And a glance of the eye which froze,
 And a ready voice of rebuke.

But when the door opened, behold !
 A mother, low-voiced and mild,
 Whose thin shawl and weak arms enfold
 A pale little two-year-old child.

What brought her there? Would I
 relieve her?
 Was all the poor mother could say ;
 For her child, scarce recovered from
 fever,
 Left the hospital only that day.

Pale, indeed, was the child ; yet so
 cheerful,
 That, seeing me wonder, she said,
 Of doubt and repulse, grown fearful,
 " Please look at his dear little head ; "

And snatched off the little bonnet,
 And so in a moment laid bare
 A shorn little head, and upon it
 No trace of the newly-come hair.

When, seeing the stranger's eye
 Grow soft ; of an innocent guile
 The child looked up, shrinking and shy,
 With the ghost of a baby smile.

Poor child ! I thought, so soon come
 To the knowledge of lives oppressed,
 To whom poverty comes with home,
 And sickness brings food and rest :

Who art launched forth, a frail little
 boat,
 In the midst of life's turbulent sea,
 To sink, it may be, or to float
 On great waves that care nothing for
 thee.

What awaits thee? An early peace
 In the depths of a little grave,
 Or, despite all thy ills to increase,
 Through some dark chance, mighty
 to save ;

Till in stalwart manhood you meet
 The strong man, who regards you to-
 day,
 Crawling slowly along the street,
 In old age withered and gray ?

Who knows? But the thoughts I have
 told
 In one instant flashed through my
 brain,
 As the poor mother, careful of cold,
 Clasped her infant to her again.

And I, if I searched for my purse,
 Was I selfish, say you, and wrong ?
 Surely silver is wasted worse
 Than in earning the right to a song !

EVENSONG.

THE hymns and the prayers were done, and the village church was still,
As I lay in a waking dream in the churchyard upon the hill.

The graves were all around, and the dark yews over my head,
And below me the winding stream and the exquisite valley were spread.

The sun was sloping down with a glory of dying rays,
And the hills were bathed in gold, and the woods were vocal with praise.

But from the deep-set valley there rose a vapour of grey,
And the sweet day sank, and the glory waxed fainter and faded away.

Then there came, like a chilling wind, a cold, low whisper of doubt,
Which silenced the echo of hymns, and blotted the glories out.

And I wrestled with powers unseen, and strove with a Teacher divine,
Like Jacob who strove with the angel, and found with the dawn a sign.

* * * * *

For I thought of the words they sang : " It is He that hath made us indeed " ;
And my thought flew back to the Fathers of thought and their atheist creed—

How atom with atom at first fortuitously combined,
Formed all, from the worlds without to the innermost worlds of mind ;

And I thought : What, if this be true, and no Maker there is indeed,
And God is the symbol alone of a feeble and worn-out creed ;

And from uncreate atoms, impelled by a blind chance driving on free,
Grew together the primal forms of all essences that be !

Then a voice : If they were, indeed, they were separate one from one
By a gulph as broad as yawns in space betwixt sun and sun—

Self-centred and self-contained, disenvirown and isolate ;
Drawn together by a hidden love, torn apart by a hidden hate.

What power was this—chance, will you say ? But chance, what else can it mean
Than the hidden Cause of things by human reason unseen ?

Chance ! Then Chance were a name for God, or each atom bearing a soul
Indivisible, like with like, part and whole of the Infinite Whole.

Were God, as the Pantheist taught, God in earth, and in sky, and in air,
God through every thought and thing, and made manifest everywhere ;

The spring and movement of things—the stir, the breathing of breath,
Without which all things were quenched in the calm of an infinite death ;

Or, if within each there lay some germ of an unborn power,
God planted it first, God quickened, God raised it from seed to flower.

Though beneath the weird cosmical force, which we wield and yet cannot name,
From the germ or the rock we draw out low gleams of life's faintest flame ;

Though we lose the will that commands, and the muscles that wait and serve,
In some haze of a self-set spring of the molecules of nerve ;

Though we sink all spirit in matter, and let the Theogonies die,
Life and death are ; thinker and thought ; outward, inward ; I, and not I,
And the I is the Giver of life, and without it the matter must die.

* * * * *

Then I ceased for a while from thought, as I lay on the long green grass,
Hearing echoes of hymns anew, and letting the moments pass.

The evening was mounting upward ; the sunbeams had left the hill ;
But the dying daylight lingered, and all the valley was still.

* * * * *

Then I said : But if God there be, how shall man by his thinking find,
Who is only a finite creature, the depths of the Infinite Mind —

Who sounds with a tiny plummet, who scans with a purblind eye,
The depths of that fathomless ocean, the wastes of that limitless sky ?

Shall we bow to a fetish, a symbol, which maybe nor sees nor hears ;
Or, seeing and hearing indeed, takes no thought for our hopes or fears ;

Who is dumb, though we long for a word ; who is deaf, though his children cry ;
Who is Master, yet bears with evil—Lord, and lets all precious things die ?

Or if in despair we turn from the godless and meaningless plan,
What do we, but make for ourselves a God in the image of man —

A creature of love and hate, a creature who makes for good,
But barred by an evil master from working the things that he would ?

If he be not a reflex image, we may not know him at all ;
If he be, we are God ourselves—to ourselves we shall stand or fall.

Then the voice : But what folly is this ! Cannot God indeed be known,
If we know not the hidden essence that forms Him and builds His throne ?

Is all our knowledge naught, of sea, and of sky, and of star,
Till we know them, not as they seem to our thinking, but as they are ?

We who build the whole fabric of knowledge on vague abstractions sublime ;
We who whirl through an infinite space, and live in an infinite time ;

We who prate of Motion and Force, not knowing that on either side
Black gulphs unavoidable yawn, dark riddles our thought deride ;

Shall we hold our science as naught in all things of earth, because
We know but the seemings and shows, the relations, and not the cause—

Not only as he who admires the rainbow and cloud of gold,
Knows that 'tis but a form of vapour his wondering eyes behold ;

But as he who sees and knows, and knowing would fain ignore
What he knows since the essence of things is hid, and he knows not more—

Or who would not love his love, or walk hand in hand with his friend,
Since he sees not the roots of the tree from whose branches life's blossoms depend ?

Or how should the sight we see, any more than the sound we hear,
Be a thing which exists for our thought, apart from the eye or the ear ;

Is not every atom of dust, which compacted we call the earth,
A miracle baffling our thought with insoluble wonders of birth ?

And know we not, indeed, that the matter which men have taught,
Is itself an essence unseen and untouched—but by spirit and thought ?

Tush ! It is but a brain-sick dream. What was it that taught us the laws
Which stand as a bar between us and the thought of the Infinite Cause ?

Is He infinite, out of relation, and absolute, past finding out ?
Reach we not an antinomy here ? feel we here no striving of doubt ?

How, then, shall the finite define the bounds of the infinite plan,
This is finite, and infinite this : here is Deity, here is man.

If our judgment be relative only, how then shall our brain transcend
The limits of relative thought ; grown too eager to comprehend ?

For he passes the bounds of relation, if any there be who can
Distinguish the absolute God from the relative in man :

He has bridged the gulph ; he has leaped o'er the bound ; he has seen with his eyes
For a moment the land unseen, that beyond the mountain peaks lies.

Nay ! we see but a part of God, since we gaze with a finite sight ;
And yet not Darkness is He, but a blinding splendour of light.

Do we shrink from this light, and let our dazzled eyeballs fall ?
Nay ! a God fully known or utterly dark, were not God at all.

Though we hold not that in some sphere which our thought may never conceive,
There comes not a time when, to know may be all, and not, to believe ;

Nor yet that the right which we love, and the wrong which we hate to-day,
May not show as reversed, or as one, when the finite has passed away ;

God we know in our image indeed, since we are in the image of Him,
Of His splendour a faint low gleam, of His glory a reflex dim.

Bowing not to the all unknown, nor to that which is searched out quite ;
But to That which is known, yet unknown—to the darkness that comes of light,
To the contact of God with man, to the struggle and triumph of right.

* * * * *

Then I ceased for a while from thought, as I lay on the long green grass,
Hearing echoes of hymns grown nearer, and letting the moments pass.

Exult, oh dust and ashes ! the low voices seemed to say ;
And then came a sudden hush, and the jubilation faded away.

The evening was dying now, and the moon-rise was on the hill,
And the soft light touched the river, and all the valley was still.

* * * * *

Then I thought : But if God there be, and our thought may reach Him indeed,
How should this bare knowledge alone stand in lieu of a fuller creed ?

If He be and is good, as they say, how yet can our judgment approve,
'Mid the rule of His iron laws, the place of His infinite love?

The rocks are built up of death, earth and sea teem with ravin and wrong ;
The sole law in Nature we learn, is the law that strengthens the strong.

Through countless ages of time, the Lord has withdrawn Him apart
From all the world He has made, save the world of the human heart.

Without and within all is pain, from the cry of the child at birth,
To its parting sigh in age, when it looks for a happier earth.

Should you plead that God's order goes forth with a measured footstep sublime,
Know you not that you thrust Him back thus to the first beginnings of time,—

That a spark, a moment, a flash, and His work was over and done ;
And the worlds were sent forth for ever, each circling around its sun.

Bearing with it all secrets of being, all potencies undefined,
All forms and changes of matter, all growths and achievements of mind.

What is there for our worship in this, and should not our reason say,
He is, and made us indeed, but hides Him too far away?

Though He lives, yet is He as one dead ; and we, who would prostrate fall
Before the light of His Presence, we see not nor know Him at all.

Then the voice : Oh folly of doubt ! what is time that we deem so far,
What else but a multiple vast of the little lives that are ?

He who lives for the fifty years, which scarce rear thought to its prime,
Already a measure has lived of a thousand years of time.

Twice this, and Christ spoke not yet, and from this what a span appears,
The space till our thought is lost in the mists of a million years !

A thousand millions of years—we have leapt with a thought, with a word ;
To the time when no flutter of life 'neath the shield of the trilobite stirred.

All time is too brief for our thought, and yet we would bring God nigh,
Till He worked in His creature's sight, man standing undazzled by.

Such a God were not God indeed ; nor, if He should change at all,
Should we hold, as we hold Him now, the God of both great and small.

How know we the great things from small? how mark we the adequate cause,
Which might make the Creator impede the march of His perfect laws,—

We, who know but a part, not the whole? Or were it a fitting thought
He should stoop in our sight to amend the errors His hand had wrought,

So His laws were not perfect at all? or should He amend them indeed,
How supply by a fitful caprice the want of a normal creed?

All life is a mode of force, and all force that is force must move ;
'Tis a friction of Outward and Inward, a contrast of Hatred and Love.

Joy and Grief, Right and Wrong, Life and Death, Finite, Infinite, Matter and
Will,
These are the twin wheels of the Chariot of Life, which without them stood still.

Would you seek in an order reversed and amended a Hand divine?
Nay the Wonder of wonders lies in unchangeable design.

Should God break His law as He might ; should He stoop from His infinite skies
To redress that which seems to us wrong, to raise up the life that dies ;

Should He save from His wolf His lamb, from His tiger His innocent child ;
Should He quench the fierce flames, or still the great waves clamouring wild,

I think a great cry would go up from an orderless Universe,
And all the fair fabric of things would wither, as under a curse.

'Tis the God of the savage, is this. What do we who rise by degrees
To the gift of the mind that perceives, and the gift of the eye that sees?

Does not all our nature tend to a law of unbending rule,
Till equity comes but to mend the law that was made by the fool?

Who shows highest?—the child or the savage, whose smiles change to rage or
to tears?
Or the statesman moving, unmoved, through a nation's desires and fears?

Or the pilgrim whose eyes look onward, as if to a distant home,
Never turning aside from his path, whatever allurements may come?

All Higher is more Unmoved ; and the more unbroken the law,
The more sure does the Giver show to the eyes of a wondering awe.

Nor is it with all of truth that they make their voices complain,
Who weary our thought with tales of a constant ruin and pain.

It is but a brain-sick dream that would gloat o'er the hopeless bed,
Or the wreck, or the crash, or the fight, with their tales of the dying and dead.

Pain comes ; hopeless pain, God knows and we know, again and again ;
But even pain has its intervals blest, when 'tis heaven to be free from pain.

And I think that the wretch who lies pressed by a load of incurable ill,
With a grave pity pities himself, but would choose to have lived to it still ;

And, as he whom the tiger bears in his jaws to his blood-stained den
Feels no pain nor fear, but a wonder, what comes in the wonderful " Then,"

He pities himself and yet knows, as he casts up life's chequered sum,
It were best on the whole to have lived, whatever calamity come.

And the earth is full of joy. Every blade of grass that springs ;
Every cool worm that crawls content as the eagle on soaring wings ;

Every summer day instinct with life ; every dawn when from waking bird
And morning hum of the bee, a chorus of praise is heard ;

Every gnat that sports in the sun for his little life of a day ;
Every flower that opens its cup to the dews of a perfumed May ;

Every child that wakes with a smile, and sings to the ceiling at dawn ;
Every bosom which knows a new hope stir beneath its virginal lawn ;

Every young soul, ardent and high, rushing forth into life's hot fight ;
Every home of happy content, lit by love's own mystical light ;

Every worker who works till the evening, and earns before night his wage,
Be his work a furrow straight-drawn, or the joy of a bettered age ;

Every thinker who, standing aloof from the throng, finds a high delight
In striking with tongue or with pen a stroke for the triumph of right ;—

All these know that life is sweet ; all these, with a consonant voice,
Read the legend of Time with a smile, and that which they read is, “Rejoice !”

* * * * *

Then again I ceased from thought, as I lay on the long green grass,
Hearing hymns which grew fuller and fuller, and letting the moments pass.

Exult, oh dust and ashes ! exult and rejoice ! they said,
For blessed are they who live, and blessed are they who are dead.

Then again they ceased and were still, and my thought began once more,
But touched with a silvery gleam of hopes that were hidden before ;

The moon had climbed up the clear sky, far above the black pines on the hill,
And the river ran molten silver, and all the valley was still.

* * * * *

Then I said : But if God there be, who made us indeed and is good,
What guide has He left for our feet to walk in the ways that He would ?

For though He should speak indeed, yet, as soon as His voice grew dumb,
It were only through human speech that the message it bore might come,

Sunk to levels of human thought, and always marred and confined
By the chain of a halting tongue, and the curse of a finite mind ;

So that he who would learn, indeed, what precepts His will has taught,
Must dim with a secular learning the brightness his soul has sought.

Who can tell how those scattered leaves through gradual ages grew,
Adding chaff and dust from the world to the accents simple and true ?

If one might from the seer's wild visions, or stories of fraud and blood,
Or lore of the world-worn Sultan, discern the sure voice of good,

Such a mind were a God to itself ; or if you should answer, For each
God has set a sure mentor within, with power to convince and teach ;

Yet it speaks with a changeful voice, which alters with race and clime,
Nay, even in the self-same lands is changed with the changes of time ;

So that 'twixt the old Europe of story and that which we know to-day,
Yawns a gulph, as wide almost as parts us from far Cathay ;

What power has such voice to help us ? Or if we should turn instead
To the precious dissonant pages, which keep what the Teacher said ;

How reduce them to one indeed, or how seek in vain to ignore
The forgotten teachers who taught His counsels of mercy before ?

Not "an eye for an eye" alone, was the rule which they loved to teach,
But Mercy, and Pity, and Love, though they spoke with a halting speech,

And He spake with the tongue of those who had spoken and then were dumb,
And clothed in the words of the Law, which He loved, would His precepts
come ;

Other teachers have drawn more millions, who follow more faithful than we ;
Other teachers have taught a rule as stern and unselfish as He.

If we shrink from the Caliph fierce, who carved out a faith with his sword,
What say we of the pilgrim who sways the old East with his gentle word ?

Or what of the sage whose vague thoughts, over populous wastes of earth,
Have led millions of fettered feet to the grave from the day of birth ?

Or how can we part indeed, the show, the portent, the sign,
From the simple words which glow with the light of a teaching Divine ?

And if careless of these, as of growths which spring up and bear fruit and fall,
Yet how shall our thought accept the crowning wonder of all ?

Yet if this we reject, wherein, doth our faith and assurance lie ?
What is it to us that God lives, we who live for a little and die ;

Or why were it not more wise to live as the beasts of to-day,
Taking life, while it lasts, as a gift, and secure of the future as they ?

Then the voice : Oh, disease of doubt ! now I seem to hold you indeed,
Keeping fast in my grasp at length the sum of your dreary creed.

How else should man prove God's will, than through methods of human thought ?

How else than through human words should he gather the things that he ought ?

If the Lord should speak day by day from Sinai, mid clouds and fire,
Should we hear 'mid those thunders loud the still voices which now inspire ?

Would not either that awful sound, like that vivid and scorching blaze,
Confuse our struggling thought, and our tottering footsteps amaze ?

Or, if it should peal so clear that to hear were to obey indeed,
'Twere a thing of dry knowledge alone, not one of a faithful creed ;

No lantern for erring feet, but a glare on a white, straight road,
Where life struggled its weary day, to sink before night with its load ;

Where the blinded soul might long for the shade of a cloud of doubt,
And yearn for dead silence, to blot that terrible utterance out.

Yet God is not silent indeed ; not seldom from every page—
From the lisping story of eld to the seer with his noble rage ;

From the simple life divine, with its accents gentle and true,
To the thinker who formed by his learning and watered the faith as it grew ;

All are fired by the Spirit of God. Nor true is the doubt you teach,
That God speaks not to all men the same, but differs 'twixt each and each.

Each differs from each a little, with difference of race and of clime ;
Each is changed, but not transformed, with the onward process of time ;

Each nation, each age, has its laws, whereto it shall stand or fall,
But built on a wider Law, which is under and over them all.

Nor doubt we that from Western wilds to the long-sealed isles of Japan,
There runs the unbroken realm of a Law that is common to man.

Not as ours shows the law they obey, and yet it is one and the same,
Though it comes in a varying shape, and is named by another name.

Not so shall your doubt prevail ; nor if any should dream to-day,
By praise of Jew or of Greek, to dissolve His glory away,

Can they hold that God left His world with no gleam of glory from Him,
No light clouds edged with splendour, no radiance of Godhead dim.

Others were before Christ had come. Oh ! dear dead Teacher, whose word,
Long before the sweet voice on the Hill, young hearts had quickened and stirred ;

Who spak'st of the soul and the life ; with limbs chilled by the rising death,
Yielding up to thy faith, with a smile, the last gasp of thy earthly breath ;—

And thou, oh golden-mouthed sage, who with brilliance of thought as of tongue,
Didst sing of thy Commonwealth fair, the noblest of epics unsung ;

In whose pages thy Master's words shine forth, sublimed and refined
In the music of perfect language, inspired by a faithful mind ;—

And ye seers of Israel and doctors, whose breath was breathed forth to move
The dry dead bones of the Law with the life of a larger love ;—

Or thou, great Saint of the East, in whose footsteps the millions have trod
Till from life, like an innocent dream, they pass'd and were lost in God ;—

And thou, quaint teacher of old, whose dead words, though all life be gone,
Through the peaceful Atheist realms keep the millions labouring on ;—

Shall I hold that ye, as the rest, spake no echo of things divine,
That no gleam of a clouded sun through the mists of your teaching may shine ?

Nay ; such thoughts were to doubt of God. Yet, strange it is and yet sure,
No teacher of old was full of mercy as ours, or pure.

'Twixt the love that He taught, and the Greek with his nameless, terrible love,
Yawns a gulph as wide as parts hell beneath and heaven above ;

'Twixt His rule of a Higher Mercy and that which the Rabbi taught,
Lies the gulph between glowing Act and barren ashes of Thought.

For the pure thought smirched and fouled, or buried in pedant lore,
He brought a sweet Reason of Force, such as man knew never before.

What to us are the men of the East, though they preach their own Gospel
indeed ?

We are men of the West, and shall stand or fall by a Western creed.

Though we see in those **Scriptures** antique, faint flames of Diviner fire,
Who would change to Buddha from Christ, as a change from lower to higher?

Yay! He is our Teacher indeed. Little boots it to-day to seek
To arraign, with a laboured learning, the words that men heard Him speak;

To cavil, to carp, to strive, through the mists of an age-long haze,
To dim to a common light the star which could once amaze;

To fix by some pigmy canon, too short for the tale of to-day,
The facts of a brief life, fled eighteen centuries away;

To mark by a guess, and to spurn, as born of a later age,
The proofs which, whenever writ, bear God's finger on every page;

Or to sneer at the wonders they saw Him work, or believed they saw;
We who know that unbending sequence is only a phase of law,

No wonder which God might do if it rested on witness of men,
Would turn to it our thought of to-day as it turned the multitudes then.

Nor proved would avail a whit if the teaching itself were not pure;
Nor if it were pure as His would make it one whit more sure.

And for the great Wonder of all. If any there be who fears
That the spark of God in his breast may be quenched in a few short years;

Who feels his faith's fire blaze aloft more clear than it burnt before,
By the thought of the empty tomb and the stone rolled back from the door:

For him was the miracle done. If no proof makes clearer to me
Than His word to my inner sense, the Higher life that shall be;

If no Force that has once leapt forth can ever decline and fall,
From the dead forces stirring the worlds, to the Life-force which dominates all;

But the sum of life is the same, and shall be when the world is done,
As it was when its first faint spark was stirred by the kiss of the sun;—

If I feel a sure knowledge within, which shall never be blotted out,
A Longing, a Faith, a Conviction, too strong for a Whisper of Doubt

That my life shall be hid with a Lord, who shall do the thing that is best—
To be purged, it may be, long time, or taken at once to rest,—

To live, it may be, myself ; from all else, individual, sole,
Or blended with other lives, or sunk in the Infinite whole—

Though I doubt not that that which is I may endure in the ages to be,
Since I know not what bars hold apart the Not-Me and the mystical Me ;—

How else than thro' Him do I grasp the faith that for Greek and Jew
Was hidden, or but dimly seen, which nor Moses nor Sokrates knew ?

Ay ! He is our Teacher indeed. He is risen, and we shall rise ;
But if only as we He rose, not the less He lives in the skies.

And if those who proclaim Him to day in the dim gray lands of the East,
Prove him not by portent or sign, not by trick or secret of priest ;

But for old cosmogonies dead, and faint precepts too weak for our need,
Offer God brought nearer to man in a living and glowing creed.

The pure teaching, the passionate love, taking thought for the humble and weak,
The pitiful scorn of wrong, which His Scriptures everywhere speak,

Not writ for the sage in his cell, but preached 'mid the turmoil and strife,
And touched with a living brand from the fire of the Altar of Life.

So, of all the wonders they tell, no wonder our hearts has stirred
Like the Wonder which lives with us still in a living and breathing Word.

More than portents, more than all splendours of rank loyal hearts devise,
More than visions of heavenly forms caught up and lost in the skies,

This the crowning miracle shows, before which we must prostrate fall ;
For this is the living voice of the Lord and Giver of all.

* * * * *

Then I ceased again from thought, as I lay on the long grave-grass,
Thrilled through by a music of hymns, and letting the moments pass.

“Exult and rejoice” ! they sang in high unison, now combined
Which were warring voices before, the voices of heart and mind.

The earth was flooded with light, over valley and river and hill,
And this is the hymn which I heard them sing, while the world lay still :

“Exult, oh dust and ashes ! Rejoice, all ye that are dead !
For ye live too who lie beneath, as we live who walk overhead.

As God lives, so ye are living ; ye are living and moving to-day,
Not as they live who breathe and move, yet living and conscious as they.

And ye too, oh living, exult. Young and old, exult and rejoice ;
For the Lord of the quick and the dead lives for ever : we hear His voice.

We have heard His voice, and we hear it sound wider and more increased,
To the sunset plains of the West from the peaks of the furthest East.

For the quick and the dead, it was given ; for them it is sounding still,
And no pause of silence arrests the clear voice of the Infinite Will.

Not only through Christ long since, and the teachers of ages gone,
But to-day He speaks, day by day, to those who are toiling on ;

More clear perhaps then, to the ear, and with nigher voice and more plain,
But still the same Teacher Divine, speaking to us again and again.

For I like not his creed, if any there be, who shall dare to hold
That God comes to us only at times far away in the centuries old.

Not so ; but He dwells with us still ; and maybe, though I know not indeed,
He will send us a Christ again, with a fuller and perfecter creed—

A Christ who shall speak to all men, East and West, and North and South,
Till the whole world shall hear and believe the gracious words of His mouth.

When knowledge has pierced through the wastes, chaining earth together and sea,
And the bars of to-day are lost in the union of all that shall be ;

And the brotherhood that He loved is more than a saintly thought,
And the wars and the strifes which we mourn are lost in the peace He taught ;

Then Christ coming shall make all things new. Or it may be that ages of pain
Shall quench the dim light of to-day, bringing back the thick darkness again.

And then, slow as the tide which flows on though each wave may seem to
recede,
Man advances again and again to the Rock of a higher creed.

Or it may be no teacher shall come down again with God in his face,
But the light which before was reflected from One shall shine on the race.

And as this wide earth grows smaller, and men to men nearer draw,
There may spring from the root of the race the flower of a nobler law,

Growing fairer, and still more fair ; or maybe, through long ages of time,
Man shall rise up from type to type, to the strength of an essence sublime,

Removed as far in knowledge, in length of life, and in good
From us, as we from the mollusc which gasped in the first warm flood,—

A creature so wise and so high that he scorns all allurements of ill,
Marching on through an ordered life in the strength of a steadfast will.

Who knows? But, however it be, we live, and shall live indeed,
In ourselves or in others to come. What more doth our longing need ?

Hid with God, or on earth, we shall see, burning brighter and yet more bright,
The sphere of humanity move throughout time on its pathway of light ;

Circling round with a narrower orbit, as age upon age fleets away,
The Centre of Force and of Being, the Fountain of Light and of Day,

Till, nearer drawn, and more near, at last it shall merge and fall
In its source ; man is swallowed in God, the Part is lost in the All ;

One more world is recalled to rest, one more star adds its fire to the sun,
One light less wanders thro' space, and the story of man is done ! "

* * * * *

Then slowly I rose to go from my place on the long grave-grass,
Where so long I had lain in deep thought, and letting the moments pass :

A great light was flooding the plains of the earth and the uttermost sky,
The low church and the deep-sunk vale, and the place where one day I shall lie,

The fresh graves of those we have lost, the dark yews with their reverend gloom,
And the green wave which only marks the place of the nameless tomb ;

And thro' all the clear spaces above—oh wonder ! oh glory of Light !—
Came forth myriads on myriads of worlds, the shining host of the night,—

The vast forces and fires that know the same sun and centre as we ;
The faint planets which roll in vast orbits round suns we shall never see ;

The rays which had sped from the first, with the awful swiftness of light,
To reach only then, it might be, the confines of mortal sight :

Oh, wonder of Cosmical Order ! oh, Maker and Ruler of all,
Before whose Infinite greatness in silence we worship and fall !

Could I doubt that the Will which keeps this great Universe steadfast and sure
Might be less than His creatures thought, full of goodness, pitiful, pure ?

Could I dream that the Power which keeps those great suns circling around,
Took no thought for the humblest life which flutters and falls to the ground ?

"Oh, Faith ! thou art higher than all." Then I turned from the glories above,
And from every casement new-lit there shone a soft radiance of love :

Young mothers were teaching their children to fold little hands in prayer ;
Strong fathers were resting from toil, 'mid the hush of the Sabbath air ;

Peasant lovers strolled thro' the lanes, shy and diffident, each with each,
Yet knit by some subtle union too fine for their halting speech :

Humble lives, to low thought, and low ; but linked, to the thinker's eye,
By a bond that is stronger than death, with the lights of the ultimate sky :

Here as there, the great drama of life rolled on, and a jubilant voice
Thrilled through me ineffable, vast, and bade me exult and rejoice ;

Exult and rejoice, oh soul ! sang my being to a mystical hymn
As I passed by the cool bright wolds, as I threaded my pinewoods dim ;

Rejoice and be sure ! as I passed to my fair home under the hill,
Wrapt round with a happy content,—and the world and my soul were still !

SONG.

BEAM on me, fair Ideal, beam on me !
Too long thou hast concealed thee in
a cloud ;
Mine is no vision strong to pierce to
thee,
Nor voice complaining loud,
Whereby thou mightest find thy dear,
and come
To thine own heart, and long-expecting
home.

Too long thou dost withdraw thee from
mine eyes ;
Too long thou lingerest. Ah, truant
sweet !
Dost thou no reckoning take of all my
sighs,
While Time with flying feet
Speeds onward, till the westering sun
sinks low—
With cruel feet so swift and yet so
slow ?

Time was I thought that thou wouldst
come a maid

White-armed, with deep blue eyes
and sunny head ;
But, ah ! too long the lovely vision
stayed.

And then, when this was fled,
Fame, with blown clarion clear, and
wide-spread wings,
Fame, crown and summit of created
things.

And then in guise of Truth, when this
grew faint,

Truth in Belief and Act, and Life
and Thought,
White-robed and virginal, a pure cold
saint,

Thou cam'st awhile, long sought ;
But only in glimpses camest thou, so I
Watch wearily until thou passest by.

I wait, I watch, I hunger, though I
know

Thou wilt not come at all who stay'st
so long.

My hope has lost its strength, my heart
its glow ;

I grow too cold for song :
Long since I might have sung, hadst thou
come then,
A song to echo through the souls of men.

Yet, since 'tis better far to dream in
sleep,

Than wholly lose the treacheries of
time,
I hold it gain to have seen thy garments
sweep

On the far hills sublime :
Still will I hope thy glorious face to
see,—
Beam on me, fair Ideal, beam on me !

AT LAST.

LET me at last be laid
On that hillside I know which scans
the vale,

Beneath the thick yews' shade,
For shelter when the rains and winds
prevail.

It cannot be the eye
Is blinded when we die,
So that we know no more at all
The dawns increase, the evenings fall ;
Shut close within a mouldering chest
of wood
Asleep, and careless of our children's
good.

Shall I not feel the spring,
The yearly resurrection of the earth,
Stir thro' each sleeping thing
With the fair throbbings and alarms of
birth,

Calling at its own hour
On folded leaf and flower,
Calling the lamb, the lark, the bee,
Calling the crocus and anemone,
Calling new lustre to the maiden's eye,
And to the youth love and ambition
high ?

Shall I no more admire
The winding river kiss the daisied plain ?
Nor see the dawn's cold fire
Steal downward from the rosy hills
again ?

Nor watch the frowning cloud,
Sublime with mutterings loud,
Burst on the vale, nor eves of gold,
Nor crescent moons, nor starlights cold,
Nor the red casements glimmer on the
hill

At Yule-tides, when the frozen leas
are still ?

Or should my children's tread
Through Sabbath twilights, when the
hymns are done,
Come softly overhead,
Shall no sweet quickening through
my bosom run,
Till all my soul exhale
Into the primrose pale,
And every flower which springs above
Breathes a new perfume from my love ;
And I shall throb, and stir, and thrill
beneath
With a pure passion stronger far than
death ?

Sweet thought ! fair, gracious dream,
Too fair and fleeting for our clearer
view !
How should our reason deem
That those dear souls, who sleep
beneath the blue
In rayless caverns dim,
'Mid ocean monsters grim,
Or whitening on the trackless sand,
Or with strange corpses on each hand
In battle-trench or city graveyard lie,
Break not their prison-bonds till time
shall die ?

Nay, 'tis not so indeed.
With the last fluttering of the failing
breath
The clay-cold form doth breed
A viewless essence, far too fine for
death ;
And ere one voice can mourn,
On upward pinions borne,
They are hidden, they are hidden, in
some thin air,
Far from corruption, far from care,
Where through a veil they view their
former scene,
Only a little touched by what has been.

Touched but a little ; and yet,
Conscious of every change that doth
befal,
By constant change beset,
The creatures of this tiny whirling
ball,
Filled with a higher being,
Dowered with a clearer seeing,
Risen to a vaster scheme of life,
To wider joys and nobler strife,
Viewing our little human hopes and
fears
As we our children's fleeting smiles and
tears.

Then, whether with fire they burn
This dwelling-house of mine when I am
fled,
And in a marble urn
My ashes rest by my beloved dead,
Or in the sweet cold earth
I pass from death to birth,
And pay kind Nature's life-long debt
In heart's-ease and in violet—
In charnel-yard or hidden ocean wave,
Where'er I lie, I shall not scorn my
grave.

SONG.

LOVE-SIGHS that are sighed and spent
in vain,
Ah ! folly, folly,
Thou dost transmute into a precious
pain,
Sweet melancholy.
Ah ! folly, folly,
Ah ! fair melancholy,
Sweeter by far thy mild remedial pain,
Than if fierce hope should rise and
throb again.

High hopes of glory sunk to naught,
 Ah ! folly, folly,
 And deep perplexities of baffled thought
 Thou healest, melancholy.
 Ah ! folly, folly,
 Ah ! sweet melancholy,
 Thou dost bear with thee a balm unsought,
 To heal the wounds of love and pride
 and thought.

Yet thou art a trivial cure for ill,
 Pale melancholy,
 Fitting best a feebler brain and will,
 Ah ! folly, folly,
 Ay, sweet melancholy,
 Folly art thou, folly.
 Who only may not trivial ills endure
 Will to thy pharmacy entrust his cure.

Since thou shalt not heal the wounds I
 know,
 Pale melancholy,
 I will seek if any comfort grow
 In jovial folly,
 Ah ! folly, folly,
 Worse than melancholy,
 No other cure there is for Fortune's
 smart
 Than a soul self-contained, and a proud
 innocent heart !

THE DIALOGUE.

UNTO my soul I said,
 " Oh, vagrant soul !
 When o'er my living head
 A few years roll,
 Is't true that thou shalt fly
 Far away into the sky,
 Leaving me in my place
 Alone with my disgrace ?

" For thou wilt stand in the East,
 The night withdrawn,
 White-robed as is a priest,
 At the door of dawn ;
 While I within the ground,
 In misery fast bound,
 Shall lie, blind, deaf, and foul,
 Since thou art fled, O soul."

Then said my soul to me :
 " Thy lot is best ;
 For thou shalt tranquil be,
 Sunk deep in rest,
 While naked I shall know
 The intolerable glow
 When as, the sun, shall rise
 A fire in fiery skies.

" Thou shalt lie cool and dark,
 Forgetting all ;
 I shall float shamed and stark,
 Till the sun fall :
 Thou shalt be earth in earth,
 Preparing for new birth ;
 While me in the heaven fierce,
 Pure glories fright and pierce."

Then said I to my soul,
 And she to me :
 " Where'er life's current roll
 We twain shall be,
 Part here and part not here,
 Partners in hope and fear,
 Until, our exile done,
 We meet at last in one."

THE BIRTH OF VERSE.

BLIND thoughts which occupy the
 brain,
 Dumb melodies which fill the ear,
 Dim perturbations, precious pain,
 A gleam of hope, a chill of fear,—

These seize the poet's soul, and mould
The ore of fancy into gold.

And first no definite thought there is
In all that affluence of sound,
Like those sweet formless melodies
Piped to the listening woods around,
By birds which never teacher had
But love and knowledge : they are glad.

Till, when the chambers of the soul
Are filled with inarticulate airs,
A spirit comes which doth control
The music, and its end prepares ;
And, with a power serene and strong,
Shapes these wild melodies to song.

Or haply, thoughts which glow and
burn
Await long time the fitting strain,
Which, swiftly swelling, seems to turn
The silence to a load of pain ;
And somewhat in him seems to cry,
" I will have utterance, or I die ! "

Then of a sudden, full, complete,
The strong strain bursting into sound,
Words come with rhythmic rush of feet,
Fit music girds the language round,
And with a comeliness unsought,
Appears the winged, embodied thought.

But howsoever they may rise,
Fit words and music come to birth ;
There soars an angel to the skies,
There walks a Presence on the earth—
A something which shall yet inspire
Myriads of souls unborn with fire.

And when his voice is hushed and
dumb,
The flame burnt out, the glory dead,

He feels a thrill of wonder come
At that which his poor tongue has
said ;
And thinks of each diviner line—
" Only the hand that wrote was mine."

SONG.

OH ! were I rich and mighty,
With store of gems and gold,
And you, a beggar at my gate,
Lay starving in the cold ;
I wonder, could I bear
To leave you pining there ?

Or, if I were an angel,
And you an earth-born thing,
Beseeching me to touch you
In rising with my wing ;
I wonder should I soar
Aloft, nor heed you more ?

Or, dear, if I were only
A maiden cold and sweet,
And you, a humble lover,
Sighed vainly at my feet ;
I wonder if my heart
Would know no pain or smart ?

THE ENIGMA.

THE gaslights flutter and flare
On the cruel stones of the street,
And beneath in the sordid glare
Pace legions of weary feet ;
Fair faces that soon shall grow hard,
Shy glances already grown bold,
The wrecks of a girlhood marred
By shame and hunger and cold.

But here, as she passes along,
 Is one whose young cheek still shows,
 'Mid the pallid, pitiful throng,
 The fresh bloom of a tender rose.
 Not long has she walked with vice,
 A recruit to the army of Ill,
 A fresh lamb for the sacrifice
 That steams up to Moloch still.

And the spell through which youth
 draws all,
 The faint shyness in hurrying walk,
 The lithe form slender and tall,
 The soft burr in her simple talk,
 Constrains the grave passer, whose brain
 Is long leagues of fancy apart,
 To thrill with a sudden pain
 And an emptiness of heart.

Poor child ! since it is not long
 Since you were indeed but a child,
 A gay thing of bird-like song,
 And even as a bird is wild ;
 With no shadow of thought or care,
 Laughing all the sweet hours away,
 When every morning was fair,
 And every season a May.

Through the red fallow on the hill
 The white team laboured along,
 While you roamed the green copses at
 will,
 And mimicked the cuckoo's song ;
 While they tossed and carried the hay,
 While the reapers were hid in the
 wheat,
 You had only to laugh and to play,
 Or to bathe in the brook your feet.

For your mother left you a child,
 Your rough father's pride and joy :
 Rejoiced that his girl was as wild
 And fearless as any boy.

Though you would not plunder the
 nest,
 Nor harry the shrieking hare,
 You could gallop bare-backed with the
 best,
 And knew where the orchises were.

"Like a boy" was what they said,
 With your straight limbs and fearless
 face ;
 Like a girl in the golden head,
 Gay fancies, and nameless grace.
 Like a boy in high courage and all
 Quick forces, and daring of will ;
 Like a girl in the peril to fall,
 And innocent blindness to ill.

And even now, on the sordid street,
 As you pass by the theatre door,
 You bring with you some freshness
 sweet
 Of the brightness and breezes of
 yore.
 Not yet are the frank eyes grown bold,
 Not yet have they lost all their joy ;
 Not yet has time taken the gold
 From the short crisp curls of the
 boy.

And if truly a boy's they were,
 Not thus would he pace forlorn ;
 Nor would careless passers-by dare
 To shoot out the lips of scorn.
 Is it Nature or man that makes
 An unequal judgment arraign
 Those whose equal nature takes
 The mark of the self-same stain ?

Leaving this one, shame and disgrace ;
 Leaving that one, honour and fame ;
 To this one, confusion of face,
 To that one, a stainless name :

A high port and respect and wealth
 For the one who is guilty indeed,
 While the innocent walks by stealth
 Through rough places with feet that
 bleed.

Do I touch a deep ulcer of Time,
 A created or ultimate ill,
 A primal curse or a crime,
 Self-inflicted through ignorance still?
 But meanwhile, poor truant, you come
 With a new face year after year,
 Leaving innocence, freedom, and home
 For these dens of weeping and fear.

To decline by a swift decay,
 To a thing so low and forlorn,
 That, for all your fresh beauty to-day,
 It were better you never were born;
 Or to find in some rare-sent hour,
 As a lily rooted in mire,
 Love spring with its pure white flower
 From the lowest depths of desire.

Heaven pity you! So little turns
 The stream of our lives from the
 right;

So like is the flame that burns
 To the hearth that gives warmth and
 light;

So fine the impassable fence,
 Set for ever 'twixt right and wrong,
 Between white lives of innocence
 And dark lives too dreadful for song.

TO THE TORMENTORS.

DEAR little friend, who, day by day,
 Before the door of home
 Art ready waiting till thy master come,
 With monitory paw and noise,
 Swelling to half delirious joys,

Whether my path I take
 By leafy coverts known to thee before,
 Where the gay coney loves to play,
 Or the loud pheasant whirls from out
 the brake

Unharm'd by us, save for some frolic
 chase,

Or innocent panting race;
 Or who, if by the sunny river's side
 Haply my steps I turn,

With loud petition constantly dost
 yearn

To fetch the whirling stake from the
 warm tide;

Who, if I chide thee, grovellest in the
 dust,

And dost forgive me, though I am
 unjust,

Blessing the hand that smote: who
 with fond love

Gazest, and fear for me, such as doth
 move

Those finer souls which know, yet may
 not see,

And are wrapped round and lost in
 ecstasy;—

And thou, dear little friend and soft,
 Breathing a gentle air of hearth and
 home;

Whose low purr to the lonely ear doth
 oft

With deep refreshment come;

Though thy quick nature is not frank
 and gay

As that one's, yet with graceful play

Thou dost beguile the evenings, and
 dost sit

With mien demurely fit;

With half-closed eyes, as in a dream

Responsive to the singing steam,

Most delicately clean and white,

Thou baskest in the flickering light;

Quick-tempered art thou, and yet, if a
child
Molest thee, pitiful and mild ;
And always thy delight is, simply
neat,
To seat thee faithful at thy master's
feet ;—

And thou, good friend and strong,
Who art the docile labourer of the
world ;
Who groanest when the battle mists are
curled
On the red plain ; who toilest all day
long
To make our gain or sport ; who art
the care
That cleanses idle lives, which, but for
thee
And thy pure, noble nature, perhaps
might sink
To lower levels, born of lust and
drink,
And half-forgotten sloughs of infamy,
Which desperate souls could dare ;—
And ye, fair timid things, who lightly
play
By summer woodlands at the close of
day ;—
What are ye all, dear creatures, tame
or wild ?
What other nature yours than of a
child,
Whose dumbness finds a voice mighty
to call,
In wordless pity, to the souls of all
Whose lives I turn to profit, and whose
mute
And constant friendship links the man
and brute ?
Shall I consent to raise
A torturing hand against your few and
evil days ?

Shall I indeed delight
To take you, helpless kinsmen, fast and
bound,
And while ye lick my hand
Lay bare your veins and nerves in one
red wound,
Divide the sentient brain ;
And while the raw flesh quivers with
the pain,
A calm observer stand,
And drop in some keen acid, and watch
it bite
The writhing life : wrench the still
beating heart,
And with calm voice meanwhile dis-
course, and bland,
To boys who jeer or sicken as they
gaze,
Of the great Goddess Science and her
gracious ways ?

Great Heaven ! this shall not be, this
present hell,
And none denounce it ; well I know,
too well,
That Nature works by ruin and by
wrong,
Taking no care for any but the
strong,
Taking no care. But we are more than
she ;
We touch to higher levels, a higher
love
Doth through our being move :
Though we know all our benefits bought
by blood,
And that by suffering only reach we
good ;
Yet not with mocking laughter, nor in
play,
Shall we give death or carve a life
away.

And if it be indeed
 For some vast gain of knowledge, we
 might give
 These humble lives that live,
 And for the race should bid the victim
 bleed,
 Only for some great gain,
 Some counterpoise of pain ;
 And that with solemn soul and grave,
 Like his who from the fire 'scapes, or
 the flood,
 Who would save all, ay, with his heart's
 best blood,
 But of his children chooses which to save!

Surely a man should scorn
 To owe his weal to others' death and
 pain?
 Sure 'twere no real gain
 To batten on lives so weak and so
 forlorn?
 Nor were it right indeed
 To do for others what for self were
 wrong.
 'Tis but the same dead creed,
 Preaching the naked triumph of the
 strong ;
 And for this Goddess Science, hard and
 stern,
 We shall not let her priests torment and
 burn :
 We fought the priests before, and not
 in vain ;
 And as we fought before, so will we
 fight again.

CHILDREN OF THE STREET.

BRIGHT boys vociferous,
 Girl-children clamorous,
 Shrill trebles echoing,
 Down the long street ;

Every day come they there,
 Afternoon foul or fair,
 Shouting and volleying ;
 Through wintry winds and cold,
 Through summer eves of gold,
 Running and clamouring :
 Never a day but brings,
 Ragged and thinly clad,
 Battling with poverty,
 Hunger, and wretchedness,
 Brave little souls forlorn,
 Gaining hard bread.
 " Terrible accident ;
 Frightful explosion, Sir ;
 News from Australia,
 News from America ;
 Only one halfpenny,
 Special edition, Sir,
Echo, Sir, Echo !"

Thus they shout breathlessly,
 Dashing and hurrying,
 Threading the carriages,
 Under the rapid feet ;
 Frightening the passer-by,
 Down the long street :
 On till they chance to meet
 Some vague philosopher.

* * *

And straightway the hurry,
 And bustle, and noise,
 Fade away in his thought
 Before tranquil joys.
 Here are problems indeed,
 Not to solve, it is true,
 But on every side filling
 The fanciful view ;
 Which ere he has grasped them
 Are vanished and gone,
 But leave him in solitude
 Never alone :
 Thoughts of Fate, and of Life,
 And the end of it all,

Of the struggle and strife
 Where few rise, many fall ;
 Thoughts of Country and Empire,
 Of Future and Past,
 And the centuries gliding
 So slow, yet so fast :
 Old fancies, yet strange,
 Thoughts sad and yet sweet,
 Of lives come to harvest,
 And lives incomplete ;
 Of the lingering march,
 Of the Infinite plan,
 Bringing slowly, yet surely,
 The glory of man ;
 Of our failures and losses,
 Our victory and gain ;
 Of our treasure of hope
 And our Present of pain.
 And, higher than all,
 That these young voices teach
 A glowing conviction
 Too precious for speech ;
 That somewhere down deep
 In each natural soul
 Sacred verities sleep,
 Holy waterfloods roll ;
 That to young lives untaught,
 Without friend, without home,
 Some gleams of a light
 That is heavenlier come ;
 That to toil which is honest
 A voice calls them still,
 Which is more than the tempter's
 And stronger than ill.

For, poor souls, 'twere better,
 If pleasure were all,
 Not to strive thus and labour,
 But let themselves fall ;
 They might gain, for a time,
 Higher wages than this,
 And that sharp zest of sinning
 The innocent miss ;

They might know fuller life,
 And, should fortune befriend,
 Escape the Law's pains
 From beginning to end ;
 Or, if they should fail,
 What for them does home bring
 Which should make of a prison
 So dreadful a thing ?
 These children, whom formalists,
 Narrow and stern,
 Have denied what high principle
 Comes from to learn ;
 To whom this great empire,
 Whose records they cry,
 Is a book sealed as close
 As the ages gone by ;
 Who bear a name great
 Among nations of earth,
 But are English alone
 By the fortune of birth ;
 These young mouths that come
 To a board well-nigh bare,
 Who elsewhere were riches,
 But here a grave care.

Great Empire ! fast bound
 By invisible bands,
 That convey to earth's limits
 Thy rulers' commands ;
 Who sittest alone
 By thy rude northern sea,
 On an ocean-built throne,
 The first home of the free,
 Whom thy tall chimneys shroud
 In a life-giving gloom ;
 Who clothest mankind
 With the work of thy loom ;
 Who o'er all seas dost send out
 Thy deep-laden ships ;
 Who teachest all nations
 The words of thy lips ;
 Who despatchest thy viceroys
 Imperially forth

To the palms of thy East
 And the snows of thy North ;
 Who governest millions
 Of dark subtle men
 By the might of just laws
 And the sword of the pen ;
 Who art planted wherever
 A white foot may tread,
 On the poisonous land
 Which for ages lies dead ;
 Who didst nourish the freeman
 With milk from thy breast,
 To the measureless Commonwealth
 Lording the West ;
 Who holdest to-day
 Of those once subject lands
 A remnant too mighty
 For weaklier hands ;
 Who in thy isle-continent,
 Yearly increased,
 Rearest empires of freemen
 To sway the far East ;
 Who art set on lone islets
 Of palm and of spice,
 On deserts of sand
 And on mountains of ice ;
 Who bring'st Freedom wherever
 Thy flag is unfurled :
 The exemplar, the envy,
 The crown of the World !

What is't thou dost owe
 To these young lives of thine,
 What else but to foster
 This dim spark divine ?
 Think of myriads like these,
 Without teaching or home,
 Who with pitiful accents
 Beseeching thee come ;
 Think how Time, whirling on,
 Time that never may rest,
 Brings the strength of the loins
 And the curve of the breast,

Till, with poor minds still childish,
 These children are grown
 To the age that shall give them
 Young lives of their own ;
 Think of those, who to-day
 In the sweet country air
 Live, as soulless, almost,
 As the birds which they scare ;
 Think of all those for whom,
 To the immature brain,
 The dull whirr of the loom
 Brings a throbbing of pain ;
 Think of countless lives fallen,
 Sunk, never to rise,
 For the lack of the warning
 Their country denies,—
 Fallen, ruined, and lost,
 Through all time that shall be,
 Fallen for ever and lost
 To themselves and to thee ;—
 Thou who standest, girt round
 By strong foes on each side,
 Foes who envy thy greatness,
 Thy glory, thy pride ;
 Thou, who surely shalt need
 Heart and soul, brain and hand,
 Brain to plan, hand to bleed,
 For thy might, O dear land !

* * * *

Till, while slowly he ponders
 These thoughts in his brain,
 See ! there swiftly comes rushing
 A young troop again.

“Terrible accident ;
 Frightful explosion, Sir ;
 News, Sir, from Germany ;
 Latest from India ;
 Special edition, Sir,
 Only one half-penny ! ”

Thus the revoluble
Assonant *Echo*.

Again they rush breathlessly ;
Dashing and hurrying,
Frighting the passer-by,
Shouting and volleying,
Bright boys vociferous,
Girl-children clamorous,
On till they meet again
Some vague philosopher.

SOULS IN PRISON.

I THOUGHT that I looked on the land
of the lost,
A stony desert, arid and bare,
Gray under a heavy air.

Not a bird was there, nor a flower, nor
a tree,
Nor rushing river, nor sounding sea ;
And I seemed to myself like a ghost.

A land of shadows, a herbless plain,
A faint light aslant on the barren
ground,
And never a sight nor a sound :

Only at times, of invisible feet,
Wearily tracking one dull, sad beat,
Too spiritless to complain ;

And of faces hid by a blank white mask,
From which there glared out cavernous
eyes,
Full of hate and revolt and lies :

As if the green earth on which others
live
Had nothing of hope or of fear to give
But a hopeless, perpetual task.

Far in the distance a vast gray pile
Stretched out its spider-like, echoing
ways

In long centrifugal rays ;

And sometimes dimly I seemed to see
Dumb gangs of poor workers, fruitlessly
Bent in hard tasks useless and vile,

To which, issuing silent, in single rank,
Along narrow pathways stony and blank
The hopeless toilers would come.

Or else each was idly cooped in a cell
Narrow, and gloomy, and hard, as hell,
Which was all that they knew of home.

And around them frowning, grimy and
tall,
With no ivy or lichen, a circling wall
Shut God and life utterly out ;

And in the midst, with unclosing eye,
A muffled watcher stood silently,
As they paced about and about.

Never alone—for, wherever they went,
From some central tower an eye was
bent
Along all the long, straight-drawn
ways.

Never alone—for an unseen eye,
As the stealthy footstep went noiselessly
by,
Swept each lonely cell with its gaze.

Always alone—for in all the throng
No word or glance as they shuffled
along
But the order-word, sharp and loud.

Always alone—for in all the crowd
No glance of comfort from pitying eyes
Might pierce through the thick disguise.

Nor, if husband were there, or child, or
wife,
Could the subtle communion of love
and life
Escape that terrible eye.

Yet husbands and wives and children
there were,
Young limbs, and age bent in a dumb
despair,
Too strong or too weak to die.

Nothing remained, as it seemed, but
thought
Of the old hopes vanished and come to
nought,
And the hopeless, perpetual care,—

Nought but to sit, as the night would
fall,
Tracing black ghosts on the blank
white wall
In a silent rage of despair ;

Or, before the dull daylight began to
break,
To start at the iron-tongued summons
and wake
To the curse of another day.

And so, in silence, to brood and plot
To regain the poor freedom and life
which were not,
Though it bartered a soul away ;

Or, later, to cherish the old offence
With a secret lurking devil of sense,
And a spring of desire self-bent,

Till at last all longing was sunk and
spent

In a lifeless, fathomless slough of con-
tent.

Not repentance, nor fear, nor grief,

Nor belief at all, nor yet unbelief ;
But a soul which skulks from itself like
a thief,

And is damned for ever and dead.

* * * *

Thus I thought to myself ; and, though
straight I saw

It was only the house of retributive
Law,

I shuddered and shrank, and fled.

A SEPARATION DEED.

WHEREAS we twain, who still are
bound for life,

Who took each other for better and for
worse,

Are now plunged deep in hate and bitter
strife,

And all our former love is grown a
curse ;

So that 'twere better, doubtless, we
should be

In loneliness, so that we were apart,
Nor in each other's changed eyes look-
ing, see

The cold reflection of an alien heart :
To this insensate parchment we reveal
Our joint despair, and seal it with our
seal.

Forgetting the dear days not long ago,
When we walked slow by starlight
through the corn :

Forgetting, since our hard fate wills
it so,

All but our parted lives and souls
 forlorn ;
 Forgetting the sweet fetters strong to
 bind
 Which childish fingers forge and baby
 smiles,
 Our common pride to watch the grow-
 ing mind,
 Our common joy in childhood's simple
 wiles,
 The common tears we shed, the kiss
 we gave,
 Standing beside the open little grave ;

Forgetting these and more, if to forget
 Be possible, as we would fain indeed.
 And if the past be not too deeply set
 In our two hearts, with roots that,
 touched, will bleed
 Yet, could we cheat by any pretext fair
 The world, if not ourselves—'twere so
 far well—
 We would not put our bonds from us,
 and bare
 To careless eyes the secrets of our hell ;
 So this indenture witnesseth that we,
 As follows here, do solemnly agree.

We will take each our own, and will
 abide
 Separate from bed and board for all
 our life ;
 Whatever chance of weal or woe betide,
 Naught shall re-knit the husband and
 the wife.
 Though one grow gradually poor and
 weak,
 The other, lapt in luxury, will not
 heed ;
 Though one, in mortal pain, the other
 seek,
 The other may not answer to the need ;

We, who through long years did to-
 gether rest
 In wedlock, heart to heart, and breast
 to breast.

One shall the daughter take, and one
 the boy,—
 Poor boy, who shall not hear his
 mother's name,
 Nor feel her kiss ; poor girl, for whom
 the joy
 Of her sire's smile is changed for sullen
 shame :
 Brother and sister, who, if they should
 meet,
 With faces strange, amid the careless
 crowd,
 Will feel their hearts beat with no
 quicker beat,
 Nor inward voice of kinship calling
 loud :
 Two widowed lives, whose fulness may
 not come ;
 Two orphan lives, knowing but half of
 home.

We have not told the tale, nor will,
 indeed,
 Of dissonance, whether cruel wrong or
 crime,
 Or sum of petty injuries which breed
 The hate of hell when multiplied by
 time,
 Dishonour, falsehood, jealous fancies,
 blows,
 Which in one moment wedded souls
 can sunder ;
 But, since our yoke intolerable grows,
 Therefore we set our seals and souls as
 under :
 Witness the powers of Wrong and
 Hate and Death.
 And this Indenture also witnesseth.

SONG.

THEY mount from glory to glory,
 They sink from deep unto deep,
 They proclaim their sweet passionate
 story,

They tremble on chords that weep,
 And with them my soul spreads her
 wings,

And my heart goes out to them and
 sings.

And chord within chord interlaces,
 Like the leaves that protect some
 fair bloom ;

And with subtle and tremulous graces,
 And tender lights dappled with
 gloom,

Like the fall of an ocean-borne bell,
 The harmonies quicken and swell.

Then swift from those languishing voices
 And accents which marry and die,
 Like the sound of a trumpet, rejoices
 One clear note unfaltering, high,
 And my soul, through its magical power,
 Bursts and dies like an aloe in flower.

FREDERIC.

As these sheets came in from the
 printer,

My lad who had brought me them
 said,

"Please, Sir, as I passed his office,
 They told me that Frederic was
 dead."

And I knew in a moment thrill through
 me,

A keen little sorrow and smart,

Then a sudden revolt and rebellion
 Assail me and fetter my heart,

As he went on with boyish prattle,
 Before I had courage to speak :
 "He died of consumption, they said,
 Sir ;
 And he earned sixteen shillings a
 week."

"How old was he?" "Just seventeen,
 Sir :

He had grown very tall and white."
 And I thought of the childish features,
 The bright cheeks, and eyes still more
 bright,

When, withdrawn from his school far
 too early,

He came with his treasured prize,
 To show to his new-found master,
 With a simple pride in his eyes ;

And how it soon proved that his writing
 Was so clear, and skilful, and fine,
 That I set him the task to decipher
 The hieroglyphs which are mine.

'Twas four years ago, and so splendid
 Did my first book of songs appear,
 That, though oftentimes already rejected,
 I sent them forth then without fear.

Nor in vain. For now many minds
 know them,

And many are kindly in praise,
 But the cold little hand that adorned
 them

Has cast up the sum of its days !

Sixteen shillings ! this pittance could
 purchase

The flower of those boyish years !

This could give to that humble ambition
Dull entries, whose total is tears !

Poor young life which was bursting to
blossom,
Which had borne its own fruitage
one day,
Had those budding years mingled
together
Slow labour with healthfuller play !

Is it man that has done this, or rather,
These dead blasts that blow, blow,
blow, blow,
Week by week, month by month, till
beneath them
Life withers and pulses beat slow ?

The dull winds that to-day are slaying
Young and old with their poisonous
breath,
Which slew the rash singer who praised
them,
Not the less with a premature death.

Is it man with bad laws and fools'
customs,
Pride, poverty, ignorant greed ?
Is it God making lives for His pleasure,
Dooms these innocent victims to
bleed ?

Great riddle which one day shall be
clearer,
Be our doubts with all reverence
said ;
But a strong power constrained me to
write them,
When I heard little Frederic was
dead.

TO MY MOTHERLAND.

DEAR motherland, forgive me, if too
long
I hold the halting tribute of my song ;
Letting my wayward fancy idly roam
Far, far from thee, my early home.
There are some things too near,
Too infinitely dear
For speech ; the old ancestral hearth,
The hills, the vales that saw our birth,
Are hallowed deep within the reverent
breast :
And who of these keeps silence, he is
best.

Yet would not I appear,
Who have known many a brighter land
and sea
Since first my boyish footsteps went
from thee,
The less to hold thee dear ;
Or lose in newer beauties the immense
First love for thee, O birth-land, which
fulfils
My inmost heart and soul,—
Love for thy smiling and sequestered
vales,
Love for thy winding streams which
sparkling roll
Through thy rich fields, dear Wales,
From long perspectives of thy folded
hills.

Ay ! these are sacred, all ;
I cannot sing of them, too near they are.
What if from out thy dark yews, gazing
far,
I sat and sang, Llangunnor ! of the
vale
Through which fair Towy winds her
lingering fall,

Gliding by Dynevor's wood-crowned
steep,

And, alternating swift with deep,
By park and tower a living thing
Of loveliness meandering ;
And traced her flowing, onward still,
By Grongar dear to rhyme, or Drys-
llwyn's castled hill,
Till the fresh upward tides prevail,
Which stay her stream and bring the
sea-borne sail,
And the broad river rolls majestic down
Beneath the gray walls of my native
town.

Would not my fancy quickly stray
To thee, sea-girt St. David's, far away,
A minster on the deep ; or, further
still,
To you, grand mountains, which the
stranger knows :
Eryri throned amid the clouds and
snows,
The dark lakes, the wild passes of the
north ;
Or Cader, a stern sentinel looking forth
Over the boisterous main ; or thee,
dear Isle
Not lovely, yet which canst my thought
beguile—
Mona, from whose fresh wind-swept
pastures came
My grandsire, bard and patriot, like in
name
Whose verse his countrymen still love
to sing
At bidding-feast or rustic junketing ?
Ah, no ! too near for song, and ye too
near,

My brethren of the ancient race and
tongue ;

The bardic measures deep, the sweet
songs sung
At congresses, which fan the sacred fire
Which did of old your ancestors inspire ;
The simple worship sternly pure,
The faith unquestioning and sure,
Which doth the priest despise and his
dark ways,
And riseth best to fullest praise
Beneath some humble roof-tree, rude
and bare,
Or through the mountains' unpolluted
air ;
Who know not violence nor blood,
And who, if sometimes ye decline from
good,
Sin the soft sins which gentler spirits
move,
Which warmer Fancy breeds, and too
much love.

I may not sing of you,
Or tell my love—others there are who
will,
Who haply bear not yet a love so true
As that my soul doth fill—
If to applause it lead, or gain, or fame ;
Better than this it were to bear the
pain
Which comes to higher spirits when
they know
They fire in other souls no answering
glow ;
Love those who love me not again,
And leave my country naught, not even
a name.

THE EPIC OF HADES.

BOOK I.

TARTARUS.

IN February, when the dawn was slow,
And winds lay still, I gazed upon the
fields
Which stretched before me, lifeless,
and the stream
Which laboured in the distance to the
sea,
Sullen and cold. No force of fancy
took
My thought to bloomy June, when all
the land
Lay deep in crested grass, and through
the dew
The landrail brushed, and the lush
banks were lit
With strawberries, and the hot noise
of bees
Wooded the chaste flowers. Rather I
seemed to move
Thro' that weird land, Hellenic fancy
feigned,
Beyond the fabled river and the bark
Of Charon ; and forthwith on every side
Rose the thin throng of ghosts.
First thro' the gloom
Of a dark grove I strayed—a sluggish
wood,
Where scarce the faint fires of the
setting stars,
Or some cold gleam of half-discovered
dawn,

Might pierce the darkling pines. A
twilight drear
Brooded o'er all the depths, and filled
the dank
And sunken hollows of the rocks with
shapes
Of terror,—beckoning hands and noise-
less feet
Flitting from shade to shade, wide eyes
that stared
With horror, and dumb mouths which
seemed to cry,
Yet cried not. An ineffable despair
Hung over them and that dark world
and took
The gazer captive, and a mingled pang
Of grief and anger, grown to fierce
revolt
And hatred of the Invisible Force
which holds
The issue of our lives and binds us fast
Within the net of Fate ; as the fisher
takes
The little quivering sea-things from the
sea
And flings them gasping on the beach
to die
Then spreads his net for more. And
then again
I knew myself and those, creatures who
lie

Safe in the strong grasp of Unchanging
 Law,
 Encompassed round by hands unseen,
 and chains
 Which do support the feeble life that
 else
 Were spent on barren space ; and thus
 I came
 To look with less of horror, more of
 thought,
 And bore to see the sight of pain that
 yet
 Should grow to healing, when the con-
 crete stain
 Of life and act were purged, and the
 cleansed soul,
 Renewed by the slow wear and waste
 of time,
 Soared after æons of days.
 . They seemed alone,
 Those prisoners, thro' all time. Each
 soul shut fast
 In its own jail of woe, apart, alone,
 For evermore alone ; no thought of
 kin,
 Or kindly human glance, or fellowship
 Of suffering or of sin, made light the
 load
 Of solitary pain. Ay, though they
 walked
 Together, or were prisoned in one cell
 With the partners of their wrong, or
 with strange souls
 Which the same Furies tore, they knew
 them not,
 But suffered still alone ; as in that
 shape
 Of hell, fools build on earth, where
 hopeless sin
 Rots slow in solitude, nor sees the
 face
 Of men, nor hears the sound of speech,
 nor feels

The touch of human hand, but broods
 a ghost,
 Hating the bare blank cell—the other
 self,
 Which brought it thither—hating man
 and God,
 And all that is or has been.

A great fear
 And pity froze my blood, who seemed
 to see

A half-remembered form.

An Eastern King
 It was who lay in pain. He wore a
 crown

Upon his aching brow, and his white
 robe

Was jewelled with fair gems of price,
 the signs

Of pomp and honour and all luxury,
 Which might prevent desire. But as I
 looked

There came a hunger in the gloating
 eyes,

A quenchless thirst upon the parching
 lips,

And such despairing strainings in the
 hands

Stretched idly forth on what I could
 not see,

Some fatal food of fancy ; that I knew
 The undying worm of sense, which frets
 and gnaws

The unsatisfied stained soul.

Seeing me, he said :
 "What? And art thou too damned
 as I? Dost know

This thirst as I, and see as I the cool
 Lymph drawn from thee and mock
 thy lips ; and parch

For ever in continual thirst ; and mark
 The fair fruit offered to thy hunger
 fade
 Before thy longing eyes ? I thought
 there was
 No other as I thro' all the weary
 lengths
 Of Time the gods have made, who
 pined so long
 And found fruition mock him.
 Long ago,
 When I was young on earth, 'twas a
 sweet pain
 To ride all day in the long chase, and
 feel
 Toil and the summer fire my blood and
 parch
 My lips, while in my father's halls I
 knew
 The cool bath waited, with its marble
 floor ;
 And juices from the ripe fruits pressed,
 and chilled
 With snows from far-off peaks ; and
 troops of slaves ;
 And music and the dance ; and fair
 young forms,
 And dalliance, and every joy of
 sense,
 That haunts the dreams of youth, which
 strength and ease
 Corrupt, and vacant hours. Ay, it
 was sweet
 For a while to plunge in these, as fair
 boys plunge
 Naked in summer streams, all veil of
 shame
 Laid by, only the young dear body
 bathed
 And sunk in its delight, while the firm
 earth,
 The soft green pastures gay with inno-
 cent flowers,

Or sober harvest fields, show like a
 dream ;
 And nought is left, but the young life
 which floats
 Upon the depths of death, to sink,
 maybe,
 And drown in pleasure, or rise at length
 grown wise
 And gain the abandoned shore.
 Ah, but at last
 The swift desire burns stronger and
 more strong,
 And feeding on itself, grows tyrannous ;
 And the parched soul no longer finds
 delight
 In the cool stream of old ; nay, this
 itself,
 Smitten by the fire of sense as by a
 flame,
 Holds not its coolness more ; and
 fevered limbs,
 Seeking the fresh tides of their youth,
 may find
 No more refreshment, but a cauldron
 fired
 With the fires of nether hell ; and a
 black rage
 Usurps the soul, and drives it on to
 slake
 Its thirst with crime and blood.
 Longing Desire !
 Unsatisfied, sick, impotent Desire !
 Oh, I have known it ages long. I
 knew
 Its pain on earth ere yet my life had
 grown
 To its full stature, thro' the weary
 years
 Of manhood, nay, in age itself ; I
 knew
 The selfsame weary thirst, unsatisfied
 By all the charms of sense, by wealth
 and power

And homage ; always craving, never
quenched—

The undying curse of the soul ! The
ministers

And agents of my will drave far and
wide

Over all lands and seas, seeking to
find

Fresh pleasures for me, who had spent
my sum

Of pleasure, and had power, not even
in thought,

Nor faculty to enjoy. They tore apart
The sacred claustral doors of home for
me,

Defiled the inviolate hearth for me,
laid waste

The flower of humble lives, in hope to
heal

The sickly fancies of the King, till rose
A cry of pain from all the land ; and I
Grew happier for it, since I held the
power

To quench desire in blood.

But even thus

The old pain faded not, but swift again
Revived ; and thro' the sensual dull
lengths

Of my seraglios I stalked, and marked
The glitter of the gems, the precious
webs

Plundered from every clime by cruel
wars

That strewed the sands with corpses ;
lovely eyes

That looked no look of love, and fired
no more

Thoughts of the flesh ; rich meats, and
fruits, and wines

Grown flat and savourless ; and loathed
them all,

And only cared for power ; content to
shed

Rivers of innocent blood, if only thus
I might appease my thirst. Until I
grew

A monster gloating over blood and
pain.

Ah, weary, weary days, when every
sense

Was satisfied, and nothing left to slake
The parched unhappy soul, except to
watch

The writhing limbs and mark the slow
blood drip,

Drop after drop, as the life ebbed with
it ;

In a new thrill of lust, till blood itself
Palled on me, and I knew the fiend I
was,

Yet cared not—I who was, brief years
ago,

Only a careless boy lapt round with
ease,

Stretched by the soft and stealing tide
of sense

Which now grew red ; nor ever dreamed
at all

What Furies lurked beneath it, but had
shrunk

In indolent horror from the sight of
tears

And misery, and felt my inmost soul
Sicken with the thought of blood.

There comes a time

When the insatiate brute within the
man,

Weary with wallowing in the mire,
leaps forth

Devouring, and the cloven satyr-hoof
Grows to the rending claw, and the
lewd leer

To the horrible fanged snarl, and the
soul sinks

And leaves the man a devil, all his sin

Grown savourless, and yet he longs to
 sin
 And longs in vain for ever.

Yet, methinks,
 It was not for the gods to leave me
 thus.

I stinted not their worship, building
 shrines

To all of them ; the Goddess of Love I
 served

With hecatombs, letting the fragrant
 fumes

Of incense and the costly steam ascend
 From victims year by year ; nay, my
 own son

Pelops, my best beloved, I gave to
 them

Offering, as he must offer who would
 gain

The great gods' grace, my dearest.

I had gained
 Through long and weary orgies that
 strange sense

Of nothingness and wasted days which
 blights

The exhausted life, bearing upon its
 front

Counterfeit knowledge, when the bitter
 ash

Of Evil, which the sick soul loathes,
 appears

Like the pure fruit of Wisdom. I had
 grown

As wizards seem, who mingle sensual
 rites

And forms impure with murderous
 spells and dark

Enchantments ; till the simple people
 held

My very weakness wisdom, and
 believed

That in my blood-stained palace-halls,
 withdrawn,

I kept the inner mysteries of Zeus
 And knew the secret of all Being ; who
 was

A sick and impotent wretch, so sick,
 so tired,

That even bloodshed palled.

For my stained soul,
 Knowing its sin, hastened to purge
 itself

With every rite and charm which the
 dark lore

Of priestcraft offered to it. Spells
 obscene,

The blood of innocent babes, sorceries
 foul

Muttered at midnight—these could
 occupy

My weary days ; till all my people
 shrank

To see me, and the mother clasped her
 child

Who heard the monster pass.

They would not hear,
 They listened not—the cold ungrateful
 gods—

For all my supplications ; nay, the
 more

I sought them were they hidden.

At the last
 A dark voice whispered nightly :
 'Thou, poor wretch,

That art so sick and impotent, thyself
 The source of all thy misery, the great
 gods

Ask a more precious gift and excel-
 lent

Than alien victims which thou prizest
 not

And givest without a pang. But shouldst
 thou take

Thy costliest and fairest offering,
 'Twere otherwise. The life which thou
 hast given

Thou mayst recall. Go, offer at the
shrine
Thy best beloved Pelops, and appease
Zeus and the averted gods, and know
again
The youth and joy of yore.'

Night after night,
While all the halls were still, and the
cold stars
Were fading into dawn, I lay awake
Distraught with warring thoughts, my
throbbing brain
Filled with that dreadful voice. I had
not shrunk
From blood, but this, the strong son of
my youth—
How should I dare this thing? And
all day long
I would steal from sight of him and
men, and fight
Against the dreadful thought, until the
voice
Seared all my burning brain, and cla-
moured, 'Kill !
Zeus bids thee, and be happy.' Then
I rose
At midnight, when the halls were still,
and raised
The arras, and stole soft to where my
son
Lay sleeping. For one moment on his
face
And stalwart limbs I gazed, and marked
the rise
And fall of his young breast, and the
soft plume
Which drooped upon his brow, and
felt a thrill
Of yearning ; but the cold voice urging
me
Burned me like fire. Three times I
gazed and turned
Irresolute, till last it thundered at me,

And awful as the Dawn—that the gods
 cared
 For costly victims, drinking in the
 steam
 Of sacrifice when the choice hecatombs
 Were offered for my wrong. Ah no !
 there is
 No recompense in these, nor any charm
 To cleanse the stain of sin, but the long
 wear
 Of suffering, when the soul which
 seized too much
 Of pleasure here, grows righteous by
 the pain
 That doth redress its ill. For what is
 Right
 But equipoise of Nature, alternating
 The Too Much and Too Little? Not
 on earth
 The salutary silent forces work
 Their final victory, but year on year
 Passes, and age on age, and leaves the
 debt
 Unsatisfied, while the o'erburdened
 soul
 Unloads itself in pain.

Therefore it is
 I suffer as I suffered ere swift death
 Set me not free, no otherwise ; and yet
 There comes a healing purpose in my
 pain
 I never knew on earth ; nor ever here
 The once-loved evil grows, only the
 tale
 Of penalties grown greater hourly
 dwarfs
 The accomplished sum of wrong. And
 yet desire
 Pursues me still—sick, impotent desire,
 Fiercer than that of earth.

We are ourselves
 Our heaven and hell, the joy, the
 penalty,

The yearning, the fruition. Earth is
 hell
 Or heaven, and yet not only earth ; but
 still,
 After the swift soul leaves the gates of
 death,
 The pain grows deeper and less mixed,
 the joy
 Purer and less alloyed, and we are
 damned
 Or blest, as we have lived."

He ceased, with a wail
 Like some complaining wind among
 the pines
 Or pent among the fretful ocean caves,
 A sick, sad sound.

Then as I looked, I saw
 His eyes glare horribly, his dry parched
 lips
 Open, his weary hands stretch idly
 forth
 As if to clutch the air—infinite pain
 And mockery of hope. "Seest thou
 them now?"

He said. "I thirst, I parch, I famish,
 yet
 They still elude me, fair and tempting
 fruit
 And cooling waters. Now they come
 again.

See, they are in my grasp, they are at
 my lips,
 Now I shall quench me. Nay, again
 they fly
 And mock me. Seest thou them, or
 am I shut
 From hope for ever, hungering, thirst-
 ing still,
 A madman and in Hell?"

And as I passed
 In horror, his large eyes and straining
 hands
 Froze all my soul with pity.

Then it was
A woman whom I saw : a dark pale
Queen,
With passion in her eyes, and fear and
pain
Holding her steadfast gaze, like one
who sees
Some dreadful deed of wrong worked
out and knows
Himself the cause, yet now is powerless
To stay the wrong he would.

Seeing me gaze
In pity on her woe, she turned and spake
With a low wailing voice—

“Thou well mayst gaze
With horror on me, sir, for I am lost ;
I have shed the innocent blood, long
years ago,
Nay, centuries of pain. I have shed
the blood

Of him I loved, and found for recom-
pense

But self-inflicted death and age-long
woe,

Which purges not my sin. And yet
not I

It was who did it, but the gods, who
took

A woman's loveless heart and tortured it
With love as with a fire. It was not I
Who slew my love, but Fate. Fate
'twas which brought

My love and me together, Fate which
barred

The path of blameless love, yet set
Love's flame

To burn and smoulder in a hopeless
heart,

Where no relief might come.

The King was old,
And I a girl. 'Tis an old tale which
runs

Thro' the sad ages, and 'twas mine.
He had spent

His sum of love long since, and I—I
knew not

A breath of Love as yet. Ah, it is
strange

To lose the sense of maidenhood, drink
deep

Of life to the very dregs, and yet not
know

A flutter of Love's wing. Love takes
no thought

For pomp, or palace, or respect of men ;
Nor always in the stately marriage bed,
Closed round by silken curtains, laid
on down,

Nestles a rosy form ; but 'mid wild
flowers

Or desert tents, or in the hind's low
cot,

Beneath the aspect of the unconscious
stars,

Dwells all night and is blest.

My love, my life !
He was the old man's son, a fair white
soul—

Not like the others, whom the fire of
youth

Burns like a flame and hurries un-
restrained

Thro' riotous days and nights, but
virginal

And pure as any maid. No careless
glance

He deigned for all the maidens young
and fair

Who sought their Prince's eye. But
evermore,

On the high pastures wandering alone,
He dwelt unwed ; weaving to Artemis,

Fairest of all Olympian maids, a wreath
From the unpolluted meads, where
never herd

Drives his white flock, nor ever scythe
has come,

But the bee sails upon unfettered wing
Over the spring-like lawns, and Purity
Waters them with soft dew; * and
yet he showed

Of all his peers most manly—heart and
soul

A very man, tender and true, and strong
And pitiful, and in his limbs and mien
Fair as Apollo's self.

It was at first

In Trœzen that I saw him, when he came
To greet his sire. Amid the crowd of
youths

He showed a Prince indeed; yet knew
I not

Whom 'twas I saw, nor that I held the
place

Which was his mother's, only from the
throng

Love, with a barbed dart aiming, pierced
my heart

Ere yet I knew what ailed me. Every
glance

Fired me; the youthful grace, the tall
straight limbs,

The swelling sinewy arms, the large
dark eyes

Tender yet full of passion, the thick
locks

Tossed from his brow, the lip and cheek
which bore

The down of early manhood, seemed
to feed

My heart with short-lived joy.

For when he stood

Forth from the throng and knelt before
his sire,

* Euripides, "Hippolytus," lines 70-78.

Then raised his gaze to mine, I felt the
curse

Of Aphrodité burn me, as it burned
My mother before me, and I dared not
meet

His innocent, frank young eyes.

Said I then young?

Ay, but not young as mine. But I had
known

The secret things of life, which age the
soul

In a moment, writing on its front their
mark

'Too early ripe;' and he was innocent,
My spouse in fitted years, within whose
arms

I had defied the world.

I turned away

Like some white bird that leaves the
flock, which sails

High in mid air above the haunts of
men,

Feeling some little dart within her
breast,

Not death, but like to death, and slowly
sinks

Down to the earth alone, and bears her
hurt

Unseen, by herbless sand and bitter
pool,

And pines until the end.

Even from that day

I strove to gain his love. Nay, 'twas
not I,

But the cruel gods who drove me. Day
by day

We were together; for in days of old
Women were free, not pent in gilded
jails

As afterwards, but free to wander alone,
For good or evil, free. I hardly took
Thought for my spouse, the King. For

I had found

My love at last : what matter if it
 were
 A guilty love ? Yet love is love indeed,
 Stronger than heaven or hell. Day
 after day
 I set myself to tempt him from his
 proud
 And innocent way, for I had spurned
 aside
 Care for the gods or men—all but my
 love.

What need to tell the tale ? Was it
 a sigh,
 A blush, a momentary glance, which
 brought
 Assurance of my triumph ? It is long
 Since I have lived, I cannot tell ; I
 know
 Only the penalty of death and hell
 Which followed on my sin. I knew he
 loved.
 It was not wonderful, seeing that we
 dwelt
 A boy and girl together. I was fair,
 And Eros fired my eyes and lent my
 voice
 His own soft tremulous tones. But
 when our souls
 Trembled upon the verge, and fancy
 feigned
 His arms around me as we fled alone
 To some free land of exile, came a
 scroll ;
 'Dearest, it may not be ; I fear the
 Gods ;
 We dare not do this wrong. I go from
 hence
 And see thy face no more. Farewell !
 Forget
 The love we may not own ; go, seek for
 both
 Forgiveness from the gods.'

When I read the words,
 The cruel words, methought my heart
 stood still,
 And when the ebbing life returned I
 seemed
 To have lost all thought of Love. Only
 Revenge
 Dwelt with me still, the fiercer that I
 knew
 My long-prized hope, which came so
 near success,
 Snatched from me and for ever.

When I rose
 From my deep swoon, I bade a mes-
 senger
 Go, seek the King for me. He came
 and sate
 Beside my couch, and all the doors
 were closed,
 And all withdrawn. Then with the
 liar's art,
 And hypocrite tears, and feigned re-
 luctancy,
 And all the subtle wiles a woman draws
 From the armoury of hate, I did instil
 The poison on his soul. Cunning
 devices,
 False grief, false anger with his son,
 regrets,
 And half confessions—these, with hate-
 ful skill
 Confused together, drove the old man's
 brain
 To frenzy ; and I watched him, with a
 sneer,
 Turn to a dotard thirsting for the life
 Of his own child. But how to do the
 deed,
 Yet shed no blood, nor know the
 people's hate,
 Who loved the Prince, I knew not.
 Till one day
 The old man, looking out upon the sea,

Besought the dread Poseidon to avenge
The treachery of his son. And as we
stood

Gazing upon the breathless blue, a cloud
Rose from the deep, a little fleecy cloud,
Which sudden grew and grew, and
turned the blue

To purple ; and a keen wind rose and
sang

Higher and higher, and the wine-dark
sea

Grew ruffled, and within the circling
bay

The tiny ripples, stealing up the sand,
Plunged loud with manes of foam, until
they swelled

To misty surges thundering on the shore.

Then at the old man's elbow as I
stood,

A deep dark thought, sent by the powers
of ill,

Answering, as now I know, my own
black hate

And not my poor dupe's anger, fired my
soul

And bade me speak. 'The god has
heard thy prayer,'

I whispered ; 'See the surge which
wakes and swells

To fury ; well I know what things shall
be.

It is Poseidon's voice sounds in the
storm

And sends thy vengeance. Young Hip-
polytus

Loves, as thou knowest, on the yellow
sand,

Hard by the rippled margin of the wave,
To urge his flying steeds. Bid him go
forth—

He will obey—and see what recompense
The god will send his wrong.

In the old man's eyes
A watery gleam of malice played
awhile—

I hate him for it—and he bade his son,
Yoking his three young fiery colts, drive
forth

His chariot on the sand.

And still the storm
Blew fiercer and more fierce, and the
white crests

Plunged on the strand, and the loud
promontories

Thundered back repercussive, and a
mist

Of foam, torn landward, hid the sound-
ing shore.

Then saw I him come forth and bid
them yoke

His untamed colts. I had not seen his
face

Since that last day, but, seeing him, I
felt

The old love spring anew, yet mixed
with hate—

A storm of warring passions. Tho' I
knew

What end should come, yet would I
speak no word

That might avert it. The old man
looked forth ;

I think he had well-nigh forgotten all
The wrong he fancied and the doom he
prayed,

All but the father's pride in the strong
son,

Who was so young and bold. I saw a
smile

Upon the dotard's face, when now the
steeds

Were harnessed and the chariot, on the
sand

Along the circling margin of the bay,

Flew, swift as light. A sudden gleam
of sun
Flashed on the silver harness as it went,
Burned on the brazen axles of the
wheels,
And on the golden fillets of the Prince
Doubled the gold. Sometimes a larger
wave
Would dash in mist around him, and in
fear
The rearing coursers plunged, and then
again
The strong young arm constrained
them, and they flashed
To where the wave-worn foreland ends
the bay.

And then he turned his chariot, a
bright speck
Now seen, now hidden, but always,
tho' the surge
Broke round it, safe ; emerging like a
star
From the white clouds of foam. And
as I watched,
Speaking no word, and breathing scarce
a breath,
I saw the firm limbs strongly set apart
Upon the chariot, and the reins held
high,
And the proud head bent forward, with
long locks
Streaming behind, as nearer and more
near
The swift team rushed—until, with a
half joy,
It seemed as if my love might yet elude
The slow sure anger of the god, dull
wrath
Swayed by a woman's lie.

But on the verge,
As I cast my eyes, a vast and purple
wall

Swelled swiftly towards the land ; the
lesser waves
Sank as it came, and to its toppling
crest
The spume-flecked waters, from the
strand drawn back,
Left dry the yellow shore. Onward it
came,
Hoarse, capped with breaking foam,
lurid, immense,
Rearing its dreadful height. The
chariot sped
Nearer and nearer. I could see my love
With the light of victory in his eyes,
the smile
Of daring on his lips : so near he came
To where the marble palace-wall con-
fined
The narrow strip of beach—his brave
young eyes
Fixed steadfast on the goal, in the pride
of life,
Without a thought of death. I strove
to cry,
But terror choked my breath. Then,
like a bull
Upon the windy level of the plain
Lashing himself to rage, the furious
wave,
Poising itself a moment, tossing high
Its bristling crest dashed downward on
the strand.
With a stamp, with a rush, with a roar.
And when I looked,
The shore, the fields, the plain, were
one white sea
Of churning, seething foam—chariot
and steeds
Gone, and my darling on the wild mad
surge
Tossed high, whirled down, beaten,
and bruised, and flung,
Dying upon the marble.

My great love
 Sprang up redoubled, and cast out my
 hate
 And spurned all thought of fear ; and
 down the stair
 I hurried, and upon the bleeding form
 I threw myself, and raised his head,
 and clasped
 His body to mine, and kissed him on
 the lips,
 And in his dying ear confessed my
 wrong,
 And saw the horror in his dying eyes
 And knew that I was damned. And
 when he breathed
 His last pure breath, I rose and slowly
 spake—
 Turned to a Fury now by love and
 pain—
 To the old man who knelt, while all
 the throng
 Could hear my secret : ‘ See, thou fool,
 I am
 The murderess of thy son, and thou my
 dupe,
 Thou and thy gods. See, he was
 innocent ;
 I murdered him for love. I scorn ye all,
 Thee and thy gods together, who are
 deceived
 By a woman’s lying tongue ! Oh,
 doting fool,
 To hate thy own ! And ye, false
 powers, which punish
 The innocent, and let the guilty soul
 Escape unscathed, I hate ye all—I
 curse,
 I loathe you !’

Then I stooped and kissed my love,
 And left them in amaze ; and up the
 stair
 Swept slowly to my chamber, and
 therein,

Hating my life and cursing men and
 gods,
 I did myself to death.

But even here,
 I find my punishment. Oh, terrible
 doom
 Of souls like mine ! To see their evil
 done
 Always before their eyes, the one dread
 scene
 Of horror. See, the wild wave on the
 verge
 Towers horrible, and he—— Oh, Love,
 my Love !
 Safety is near ! quick ! quicker ! urge
 them on !
 Thou wilt ’scape it yet !—Nay, nay, it
 bursts on him !
 I have shed the innocent blood ! Oh,
 dreadful gaze
 Within his glazing eyes ! Hide them,
 ye gods !
 Hide them ! I cannot bear them.
 Quick ! a dagger !
 I will lose their glare in death. Nay,
 die I cannot ;
 I must endure and live—Death brings
 not peace
 To the lost souls in Hell.”

And her eyes stared,
 Rounded with horror, and she stooped
 and gazed
 So eagerly, and pressed her fevered hands
 Upon her trembling forehead with such
 pain
 As drives the gazer mad.

Then as I passed,
 I marked against the hardly dawning sky
 A toilsome figure standing, bent and
 strained,
 Before a rocky mass, which with great
 pain
 And agony of labour it would thrust
 Up a steep hill. But when upon the crest
 It poised a moment, then I held my
 breath
 With dread, for, lo! the poor feet
 seemed to clutch
 The hillside as in fear, and the poor
 hands
 With hopeless fingers pressed into the
 stone
 In agony, and the limbs stiffened, and
 a cry
 Like some strong swimmer's, whom the
 mightier stream
 Sweeps downward, and he sees his
 children's eyes
 Upon the bank; broke from him; and
 at last,
 After long wrestlings with despair, the
 limbs
 Relaxed, and as I closed my fearful eyes,
 Seeing the inevitable doom—a crash,
 A horrible thunderous noise, as down
 the steep
 The shameless fragment leapt. From
 crag to crag
 It bounded ever swifter, flashing fire
 And wreathed with smoke, as to the
 lowest depths
 Of the vale it tore, and seemed to take
 with it
 The miserable form whose painful gaze
 I caught, as with the great rock whirled
 and dashed

Downward, and marking every crag
 with gore
 And long gray hairs, it plunged, yet
 living still,
 To the black hollow; and then a
 silence came
 More dreadful than the noise, and a
 low groan
 Was all that I could hear.

When to the foot
 Of the dark steep I hurried, half in hope
 To find the victim dead—not recog-
 nizing
 The undying life of Hell—I seemed to
 see
 An aged man, bruised, bleeding, with
 gray hairs,
 And eyes from which the cunning leer
 of greed
 Was scarcely yet gone out.

A crafty voice
 It was that answered me, the voice of
 guile

Part purified by pain:

“There comes not death
 To those who live in Hell, nor hardly
 pause
 Of suffering longer than may serve to
 make

The pain renewed, more piercing.
 Long ago,
 I thought that I had cheated Death,
 and now

I seek him; but he comes not, nor know I

If ever he will hear me. Whence art thou?

Comest thou from earthly air, or whence? What power

Has brought thee hither? For I know indeed

Thou art not lost as I; for never here
 I look upon a human face, nor see

The ghosts who doubtless here on every
side

Suffer a common pain, only at times
I hear the echo of a shriek far off,
Like some faint ghost of woe which
fills the pause

And interval of suffering; but from
whom

The voice may come, or whence, I
know not, only

The air teems with vague pain, which
doth distract

The ear when for a moment comes
surcease

Of agony, and the sense of effort spent
In vain and fruitless labour, and the pang
Of long-deferred defeat, which waits
and takes

The world-worn heart, and maddens it
when all—

Heaven, conscience, happiness, are
staked and lost

For gains which still elude it.

Yet 'twas sweet,

A King in early youth, when pleasure
is sweet,

To live the fair successful years, and
know

The envy and respect of men. I cared
For none of youth's delights: the
dance, the song,

Allured me not; the smooth soft ways
of sense

Tempted me not at all. I could despise
The follies that I shared not, spending all
The long laborious days in toilsome
schemes

To compass honour and wealth, and,
as I grew

In name and fame, finding my hoarded
gains

Transmuted into Power. The seas
were white

With laden argosies, and all were mine.
The sheltering moles defied the wintry
storms,

And all were mine. The marble aque-
ducts,

The costly bridges, all were mine.
Fair roads

Wound round and round the hills—my
work. The gods

Alone I heeded not, nor cared at all
For aught but that my eyes and ears
might take,

Spurning invisible things, nor built I to
them

Temple or shrine, wrapt up in life, set
round

With earthly blessings like a god. I rose
To such excess of weal and fame and
pride,

My people held me god-like. I grew
drunk

With too great power, scoffing at men
and gods,

Careless of both, but not averse to fling
To those too weak themselves, what
benefits

My larger wisdom spurned.

Then suddenly

I knew the pain of failure. Summer
storms

Sucked down my fleets even within
sight of port.

A grievous blight wasted the harvest-
fields,

Mocking my hopes of gain. Wars
came and drained

My store, and I grew needy, knowing now
The hell of stronger souls, the loss of
power

Wherein they exulted once. There
comes no pain

Deeper than to have known delight of
power,

And then to lose it all. But I, I would
not
Sit tame beneath defeat, trimming my
sails
To wait the breeze of Fortune—fickle
breath
Which perhaps might breathe no more
—but chose instead
By rash conceit and bolder enterprise
To win her aid again. I had no thought
Of selfish gain, only to be and act
As a god to those, feeding my sum of
pride
With acted good.

But evermore defeat
Dogged me, and more and more my
people grew
To doubt me, seeing not the wealth,
the force,
Which once they worshipped. Then
the lust of power
Loved, not for sake of others, but itself,
Grew on me, and the pride which can
dare all,
Save failure only, seized me. Evil
finds
Its ready chance. There were rich
argosies
Upon the seas: I sank them, ship and
crew,
In the unbetraying ocean. Wayfarers
Crossing the passes with rich mer-
chandise
My creatures, hid behind the crags,
o'erwhelmed
With rocks hurled downward. Yet I
spent my gains
For the public weal, not otherwise;
and they,
The careless people, took the piteous
spoils
Which cost the lives of many, and a
man's soul,

And blessed the giver. Empty venal
blessings,
Which sting more deep than curses!

For awhile
I was content with this, but at the last
A great contempt and hatred of them
took me,
The base, vile churls! Why should
I stain my soul
For such as those—dogs that would
fawn and lick
The hand that fed them, but, if food
should fail,

Would turn and rend me? I would
none of them;
I would grow rich and happy, being
indeed

Godlike in brain to such. So with all
craft,

And guile, and violence I enriched me,
loading

My treasures with gold. My deep-laid
schemes

Of gain engrossed the long laborious
days,

Stretched far into the night. Enjoy,
I might not,

Seeing it was all to do, and life so brief
That ere a man might gain the goal he
would,

Lo! Age, and with it Death, and so
an end!

For all the tales of the indignant gods,
What were they but the priests'? I
had myself

Broken all oaths; long time deceived
and ruined

With every phase of fraud the pious
fools

Whom oath-sworn Justice bound;
battered on blood;

And what was I the worse? How
should the gods

Bear rule if I were happy? Death alone
Was certain. Therefore must I haste
to heap
Treasure sufficient for my need, and
then
Enjoy the gathered good.

But gradually
There came—not great disasters which
might crush
All hope, but petty checks which did
decrease
My store, and left my labour vain, and
me
Unwilling to enjoy; and gradually
I felt the chill approach of age, which
stole

Higher and higher on me, till the life,
As in a paralytic, left my limbs
And heart, and mounted upwards to
my brain,

Its last resort, and rested there awhile
Ere it should spread its wings. But
even thus,

Tho' powerless to enjoy, the insatiate
greed

And thirst of power sustained me, and
supplied

Life's spark with some scant fuel, till
it seemed,

Year after year, as if I could not die,
Holding so fast to life. I grew so old
That all the comrades of my youth,
my prime,

My age, were gone, and I was left alone
With those who knew me not, bereft
of all

Except my master passion—an old man
Forlorn, forgotten of the gods and
Death.

Yet all the people, seeing me grow old
And prosperous, held me wise, and
spread abroad

Strange fables, growing day by day
more strange—

How I deceived the very gods. They
thought

That I was blest, remembering not the
wear

Of anxious thought, the growing sum
of pain,

The failing ear and eye, the slower
limbs,

Whose briefer name is Age: and yet I
trow

I was not all unhappy, though I knew
It was too late to enjoy, and though
my store

Increased not as my greed—nay, even,
sunk down

A little, year by year. Till, last of
all,

When now my time was come and I
had grown

A little tired of living, a trivial hurt
Laid me upon my bed; and as I mused
On my long life and all its villainies,

The wickedness I did, the blood I shed,
The guile, the frauds of years—they
came with news,

One now, and now another; how my
schemes

Were crushed, my enterprises lost, my
toil

And labour all in vain. Day after day
They brought these tidings, while I
longed to rise

And stay the tide of ill, and raved to
know

I could not. At the last the added sum
Of evil, like yon great rock poised
awhile

Uncertain, gathered into one, o'er-
whelmed

My feeble strength, and left me ruined
and lost,

And showed me all I was, and all the
depth

And folly of my sin, and racked my
brain,

And sank me in despair and misery,
And broke my heart and slew me.

Therefore 'tis
I spend the long, long centuries which
have come

Between me and my sin, in such dread
tasks

As that thou sawest. In the soul I
sinned :

In body and soul I suffer. What I bade
My minions do to others, that of woe
I bear myself ; and in the pause of ill,
As now, I know again the bitter pang
Of failure, which of old pierced thro'
my soul

And left me to despair. The pain of
mind

Is fiercer far than any bodily ill,
And both are mine—the pang of tor-
ture-pain

Always recurring ; and, far worse, the
pang

Of consciousness of black sins sinned
in vain—

The doom of constant failure.

Will, fierce Will !
Thou parent of unrest and toil and
woe,

Measureless effort ! growing day by day
To force strong souls along the giddy
steep

That slopes to the pit of Hell, where
effort serves

Only to speed destruction ! Yet I know
Thou art not, as some hold, the primal
curse

Which doth condemn us ; since thou
bearest in thee

No power to satisfy thyself ; but rather,

The spring of act, whereby in earth
and heaven

Both men and gods do breathe and
live and are,

Since Life is Act and not to Do is
Death—

I do not blame thee : but to work in
vain

Is bitterest penalty : to find at last
The soul all fouled with sin and stained
with blood

In vain ; ah, this is hell indeed—the
hell

Of lost and striving souls ! ”

Then as I passed,
The halting figure bent itself again
To the old task, and up the rugged
steep

Thrust the great rock with groanings.
Horror chained

My parting footsteps, like a nightmare
dream

Which holds us that we flee not, with
fixed eyes

That loathe to see, yet cannot choose
but gaze

Till all be done. Slowly, with dread-
ful toil

And struggle and strain, and bleeding
hands and knees,

And more than mortal strength, against
the hill

He pressed, the wretched one ! till
with long pain

He trembled on the summit, a gaunt
form,

With that great rock above him, poised
and strained,

Now gaining, now receding, now in act
To win the summit, now borne down
again,

And then the inevitable crash—the
mass

Leaping from crag to crag. But ere it
ceased
In dreadful silence, and the low groan
came,
My limbs were loosed with one con-
vulsive bound ;
I hid my face within my hands, and fled,
Surfeit with horror.

Then it was again

A woman whom I saw, pitiless, stern,
Bearing the brand of blood—a lithe
dark form,
And cruel eyes which burned beneath
the gems
That argued her a Queen, and on her
side
An ancient stain of gore, which did
befoul
Her royal robe. A murderess in thought
And dreadful act, who took within the
toils
Her kingly Lord, and slew him of old
time
After burnt Troy. I had no time to
speak
When she shrieked thus :

“It doth repent me not.

I would ’twere yet to do, and I would
do it
Again a thousand times, if the shed
blood
Might for one hour restore me to the
kisses
Of my Ægisthus. Oh, he was divine,
My hero, with the godlike locks and
eyes
Of Eros’ self ! What boots it that they
prate
Of wifely duty, love of spouse or child,

Honour or pity, when the swift fire takes
A woman’s heart, and burns it out, and
leaps
With fierce forked tongue around it,
till it lies
In ashes, a dead heart, nor aught re-
mains
Of old affections, naught but the new
flame
Which is unquenched desire ?

It did not come,

My blessing, all at once, but the slow
fruit
Of solitude and midnight loneliness,
And weary waiting for the tardy news
Of taken Troy. Long years I sate alone,
Widowed, within my palace, while my
Lord
Was over seas, waging the accursed war,
First of the file of Kings. Year after
year
Came false report, or harder, no report
Of the great fleet. The summers waxed
and waned,
The wintry surges smote the sounding
shores,
And yet there came no end of it. They
brought
Now hopeless failure, now great vic-
tories ;
And all alike were false, all but delay
And hope deferred, which coming not,
can break
The strong heart suffering wrings not.
So I bore
Long time the solitary years, and sought
To solace the dull days with motherly
cares
For those my Lord had left me. My
firstborn,
Iphigeneia, sailed at first with him
Upon that fatal voyage, but the young
Orestes and Electra stayed with me—

Not dear as she was, for the firstborn
takes
The mother's heart, and, with the milk
it draws
From the mother's virgin breast, drains
all the love
It bore, ay, even tho' the sire be dear ;
Much more, then, when he is a King
indeed,
Mighty in war and council, but too high
To stoop to a woman's love. But she
was gone,
Nor heard I tidings of her, knowing not
If yet she walked the earth, nor if she
bare
The load of children, even as I had
borne
Her in my opening girlhood, when I
leapt
From child to Queen, but never loved
the King.

Thus the slow years rolled onward,
till at last
There came a dreadful rumour—'She
is dead,
Thy daughter, years ago. The cruel
priests
Clamoured for blood ; the stern cold
Kings stood round
Without a tear, and he, her sire, with
them,
To see a virgin bleed. They cut with
knives
The slender girlish throat; they watched
the blood
Drip slowly on the sand, and the young
life
Meek as a lamb come to the sacrifice
To appease the angry gods.' And he,
the King,
Her father, stood by too, and saw them
work

The wickedness, breathing no word of
wrath,
Till all was done ! The cowards ! the
dull cowards !
I would some black storm, bursting
suddenly,
Had whelmed them and their fleets, ere
yet they dared
To waste an innocent life !
I had gone mad,
I know it, but for him, my own, my
dear,
My fair sweet love. He came to com-
fort me
With words of friendship, holding that
my Lord
Was bound, perhaps, to let her die—
'The gods
Were oftentimes hard to appease—or was
it indeed
The priests who asked it? Were there
any gods?
Or only phantoms, creatures of the brain,
Born of the fears of men, the greed of
priests,
Useful to govern women? Had he
been
Lord of the fleet, not all the sooth-
sayers
Who ever frightened cowards should have
sunk
His soul to such black depths.' I
hearkening to him
As 'twere my own thought grown
articulate,
Found my grief turn to hate, and hate
to love—
Hate of my Lord, love of the voice
which spoke
Such dear and comfortable words. And
thus,
Love to a storm of passion growing,
swept

My wounded soul and dried my tears,
as dries

The hot sirocco all the bitter pools
Of salt among the sand. I never
knew

True love before ; I was a child, no
more,

When the King cast his eyes on me.
What is it

To have borne the weight of offspring
'neath the zone

If Love be not their sire ; or live long
years

Of commerce, not of love ? Better a
day

Of Passion than the long unlovely years
Of wisely duty, when Love cometh not
To wake the barren days !

And yet at first
I hesitated long, nor would embrace
The blessing that was mine. We are
hedged round,

We women, by such close-drawn ordi-
nances,

Set round us by our tyrants, that we
fear

To overstep a hand's breadth the dull
bounds

Of custom ; but at last Love, waking
in me,

Burst all my chains asunder, and I
lived

For naught but Love.

My son, the young Orestes,
I sent far off ; my girl Electra only
Remained, too young to doubt me, and
I knew

At last what 'twas to live.

So the swift years
Fleeted and found me happy, till the
black

Ill-omened day when Rumour, thou-
sand-tongued,

Whispered of taken Troy ; and from
my dream

Of happiness, sudden I woke, and knew
The coming retribution. We had
grown

Too loving for concealment, and our
tale

Of mutual love was bruited far and
wide

Through Argos. All the gossips bruited
it,

And were all tongue to tell it to the
King

When he should come. And should
the cold proud Lord

I never loved, the murderer of my girl,
Come 'twixt my love and me ? A
swift resolve

Flashed through me pondering on it :
Love for Love

And Blood for Blood—the simple
golden rule

Taught by the elder gods.

When I had taken
My fixed resolve, I grew impatient for
it,

Counting the laggard days. Oh, it was
sweet

To simulate the yearning of a wife

Long parted from her Lord, and mock
the fools

Who dogged each look and word, and
but for fear

Had torn me from my throne—the
pies, the jays,

The impotent chatterers, who thought
by words

To stay me in the act ! 'Twas sweet
to mock them

And read distrust within their eyes,
when I,

Knowing my purpose, bade them quick
prepare

All fitting honours for the King, and
knew

They dared not disobey—oh, 'twas
enough

To wing the slow-paced hours.

But when at last

I saw his sails upon the verge, and then
The sea worn ship, and marked his
face grown old,

The body a little bent, which was so
straight,

The thin gray hairs which were the
raven locks

Of manhood when he went, I felt a
moment

I could not do the deed. But when I
saw

The beautiful sad woman come with
him,

The future in her eyes, and her pale
lips

Silent, but charged with doom, two
thoughts at once

Assailed me, bidding me despatch with
a blow

Him and his mistress, making sure the
will

Of fate, and my revenge.

Oh, it was strange

To see all happen as we planned; as
'twere

Some drama oft rehearsed, wherein
each step,

Each word, is so prepared, the poorest
player

Knows his turn come to do—the solemn
landing—

The ride to the palace gate—the cour-
tesies

Of welcome—the mute crowds without
—the bath

Prepared within—the precious circling
folds

Of tissue stretched around him, shutting
out

The gaze, and folding helpless like a
net

The mighty limbs—the battle-axe laid
down

Against the wall, and I, his wife and
Queen,

Alone with him, waiting and watching
still,

Till the woman shrieked without.

Then with swift step

I seized the axe, and struck him as he
lay

Helpless, once, twice, and thrice—once
for my girl,

Once for my love, once for the woman,
and all

For Fate and my Revenge !

He gave a groan,

Once only, as I thought he might; and
then

No sound but the quick gurgling of the
blood,

As it flowed from him in streams, and
turned the pure

And limpid water of the bath to red—

I had not looked for that—it flowed
and flowed,

And seemed to madden me to look on
it,

Until my love with hands bloody as
mine,

But with the woman's blood, rushed in,
and eyes

Rounded with horror; and we turned
to go,

And left the dead alone.

But happiness

Still mocked me, and a doubt un-
known before

Came on me, and amid the silken
shows

And luxury of power I seemed to
see

Another answer to my riddle of life
Than that I gave myself, and it was
'murder ;'

And in my people's sullen mien and
eyes,

'Murder ;' and in the mirror, when I
looked,

'Murder' glared out, and terror lest
my son

Returning, grown to manhood, should
avenge

His father's blood. For somehow, as
'twould seem,

The gods, if gods there be, or the stern
Fate

Which doth direct our little lives, do
filch

Our happiness—though bright with
Love's own ray,

There comes a cloud which veils it.
Yet, indeed,

My days were happy. I repent me
not ;

I would wade through seas of blood to
know again

Those keen delights once more.

But my young girl

Electra, grown to woman, turned from
me

Her modest maiden eyes, nor loved
to set

Her kiss upon my cheek, but, all dis-
traught

With secret care, hid her from all the
pomps

And revelries which did befit her youth,
Walking alone ; and often at the tomb

Of her lost sire they found her, pouring
out

Libations to the dead. And evermore
I did bethink me of my son Orestes,

Who now should be a man ; and
yearned sometimes

To see his face, yet feared lest from his
eyes

His father's soul should smite me.

So I lived

Happy and yet unquiet—a stern voice
Speaking of doom, which long time
softer notes

Of careless weal, the music that doth
spring

From the fair harmonies of life and
love,

Would drown in their own concord.
This at times,

Nay, day by day, stronger and dread-
fuller,

With dominant accent, marred the
sounds of joy

By one prevailing discord. So at
length

I came to lose the Present in the
dread

Of what might come ; the penalty that
waits

Upon successful sin ; who, having
sinned,

Had missed my sin's reward.

Until one day

I, looking from my palace casement,
saw

A humble suppliant, clad in pilgrim
garb,

Approach the marble stair. A sudden
throb

Thrilled thro' me, and the mother's
heart went forth

Thro' all disguise of garb and rank and
years,

Knowing my son. How fair he was,
how tall

And vigorous, my boy ! What strong
straight limbs

And noble port ! How beautiful the
 shade
 Of manhood on his lip ! I longed to
 burst
 From my chamber down, yearning to
 throw myself
 Upon his neck within the palace court,
 Before the guards — spurning my
 queenly rank,
 All but my motherhood. And then a
 chill
 Of doubt o'erspread me, knowing what
 a gulf
 Fate set between our lives. impass-
 able
 As that great gulf which yawns 'twixt
 life and death
 And 'twixt this Hell and Heaven. I
 shrank back,
 And turned to think a moment, half in
 fear,
 And half in pain ; dividing the swift
 mind,
 Yet all in love.
 Then came a cry, a groan,
 From the inner court, the clash of
 swords, the fall
 Of a corpse upon the pavement ; and
 one cried,
 ' The King is dead, slain by the young
 Orestes,
 Who cometh hither.' With the word,
 the door
 Flew open, and my son stood straight
 before me,
 His drawn sword dripping blood. Oh,
 he was fair
 And terrible to see, when from his
 limbs,
 The suppliant's mantle fallen, left the
 mail
 And arms of a young warrior. Love
 and Hate,

Which are the offspring of a common
 sire,
 Strove for the mastery, till within his
 eyes
 I saw his father's ghost glare unappeased
 From out Love's casements.
 Then I knew my fate
 And his—mine to be slain by my son's
 hand,
 And his to slay me, since the Furies
 drove
 Our lives to one destruction ; and I
 took
 His point within my breast.
 But I praise not
 The selfish, careless gods who wrecked
 our lives,
 Making the King the murderer of his
 girl,
 And me his murderess ; making my
 son
 The murderer of his mother and her
 love—
 A mystery of blood !—I curse them
 all,
 The careless Forces, sitting far with-
 drawn
 Upon the heights of Space, taking
 men's lives
 For playthings, and deriding as in
 sport
 Our happiness and woe—I curse them
 all.
 We have a right to joy ; we have a
 right,
 I say, as they have. Let them stand
 confessed
 The puppets that they are—too weak
 to give
 The good they feign to love, since Fate,
 too strong
 For them as us, beyond their painted
 sky,

Sits and derides them, all. I curse
 Fate too,
 The deaf blind Fury, taking human
 souls
 And crushing them, as a dull fretful
 child
 Crushes its toys and knows not with
 what skill
 Those feeble forms are feigned.
 I curse, I loathe,
 I spit on them. It doth repent me
 not.
 I would 'twere yet to do. I have lived
 my life.
 I have loved. See, there he lies within
 the bath,
 And thus I smite him ! thus ! Didst
 hear him groan ?
 Oh, vengeance, thou art sweet ! What,
 living still ?
 Ah me ! we cannot die ! Come, torture
 me,
 Ye Furies—for I love not soothing
 words—
 As once ye did my son. Ye miserable
 Blind ministers of Hell, I do defy
 you ;
 Not all your torments can undo the
 Past
 Of Passion and of Love !”

Even as she spake
 There came a viewless trouble in the
 air,
 Which took her, and a sweep of wings
 unseen,
 And terrible sounds, which swooped
 on her and hushed
 Her voice, and seemed to occupy her
 soul
 With horror and despair ; and as she
 passed
 I marked her agonized eyes.

But as I went,
 Full many a dreadful shape of lonely
 pain
 I saw. What need to tell them ? We
 are filled
 Who live to-day with a more present
 sense
 Of the great love of God, than those of
 old
 Who, groping in the dawn of Know-
 ledge, saw
 Only dark shadows of the Unknown ;
 or he,
 First-born of later singers, who swept
 deep
 His awful lyre, and woke the voice of
 song,
 Dumb thro' the age-long night. We
 dread to-day
 To dwell on those long agonies its sin
 Brings on the offending soul ; who
 through a creed
 Of deeper Pity, know what chains of
 ill
 Confine our petty lives. Each phase
 of woe,
 Suffering, and torture which the gloomy
 thought
 Of bigots feigns for others—all were
 there.
 One there was stretched upon a rolling
 wheel,
 Which was the barren round of sense,
 that still
 Returned upon itself and broke the
 limbs
 Bound to it day and night. Others I
 saw
 Doomed, with unceasing toil, to fill the
 urns

Whose precious waters sank ere they
 could slake
 Their burning thirst. Another shapeless
 soul,
 Full of revolts and hates and tyrannous
 force,
 The weight of earth, which was its
 earth-born taint,
 Pressed groaning down, while with fierce
 beak and claw,
 The vulture of remorse, piercing his
 breast,
 Preyed on his heart. For others, over-
 head,
 Great crags of rock impending seemed
 to fall,
 But fell not nor brought peace. I felt
 my soul
 Blunted with horrors, yearning to escape
 To where, upon the limits of the wood,
 Some scanty twilight grew.

But ere I passed
 From those grim shades a deep voice
 sounded near,
 A voice without a form.

"There is an end
 Of all things that thou seest ! There is
 an end
 Of Wrong and Death and Hell, when
 the long wear

Of Time and Suffering has effaced the
 stain

Ingrown upon the soul, and the cleansed
 spirit,

Long ages floating on the wandering
 winds

Or rolling deeps of Space, renews itself
 And doth regain its dwelling, and, once
 more

Blent with the general order, floats anew
 Upon the stream of Things,* and comes
 at length,

After new deaths, to that dim waiting-
 place

Thou next shalt see, and with the
 justified

White souls awaits the End; or, snatched
 at once,

If Fate so will, to the pure sphere
 itself,

Lives and is blest, and works the Eternal
 Work

Whose name and end is Love ! There
 is an end

Of Wrong and Death and Hell !"

Even as I heard,
 I passed from out the shadow of Death
 and Pain,

Crying, "There is an end !"

BOOK II.

HADES.

THEN from those dark
 And dreadful precincts passing, ghostly
 fields
 And voiceless took me. A faint twilight
 veiled
 The leafless, shadowy trees and herb-
 less plains.

There stirred no breath of air to wake
 to life

The slumbers of the world. The sky
 above

Was one gray, changeless cloud; there
 looked no eye

Of Life from the veiled heavens; but
 Sleep and Death

* Virgil, "Æneid" vi. 740.

Compassed me everywhere. And yet
no fear

Nor horror took me here, where was
no pain

Nor dread, save that strange tremor
which assails

One who in life's hot noontide looks on
death

And knows he too shall die. The
ghosts which rose

From every darkling copse showed
thin and pale—

Thinner and paler far than those I left
In agony ; even as Pity seems to wear
A thinner form than Fear.

Not caged alone
Like those the avenging Furies purged
were these,

Nor that dim land as those black
cavernous depths

Where no hope comes. Fair souls
were they and white

Whom there I saw, waiting as we shall
wait,

The Beatific End, but thin and pale
As the young faith which made them ;
touched a little

By the sad memories of the earth ;
made glad

A little by past joys : no more ; and
wrapt

In musing on the brief play played by
them

Upon the lively earth, yet ignorant
Of the long lapse of years, and what
had been

Since they too breathed Life's air, or if
they knew

Keeping some echo only ; but their
pain

Was fainter than their joy, and a great
hope

Like ours possessed them dimly.

First I saw

A youth who pensive leaned against
the trunk

Of a dark cypress, and an idle flute
Hung at his side. A sorrowful sad
soul,

Such as sometimes he knows, who
meets the gaze,

Mute, uncomplaining yet most pitiful,
Of one whom Nature, by some secret
spite,

Has maimed and left imperfect ; or the
pain

Which fills a poet's eyes. Beneath his
robe

I seemed to see the scar of cruel stripes,
Too hastily concealed. Yet was he
not

Wholly unhappy, but from out the
core

Of suffering flowed a secret spring of
joy,

Which mocked the droughts of Fate,
and left him glad

And glorying in his sorrow. As I
gazed

He raised his silent flute, and, half
ashamed,

Blew a soft note ; and as I stayed
awhile

I heard him thus discourse—

“ The flute is sweet

To gods and men, but sweeter far the
lyre

And voice of a true singer. Shall I
fear

To tell of that great trial, when I
strove

And Phœbus conquered? Nay, no
shame it is

To bow to an immortal melody ;
But glory.

Once among the Phrygian hills
I lay a-musing,—while the silly sheep
Wandered among the thyme—upon the
bank

Of a clear mountain stream, beneath
the pines,

Safe hidden from the noon. A dreamy
haze

Played on the uplands, but the hills
were clear

In sunlight, and no cloud was on the
sky.

It was the time when a deep silence
comes

Upon the summer earth, and all the
birds

Have ceased from singing, and the
world is still

As midnight, and if any live thing
move—

Some fur-clad creature, or cool gliding
snake—

Within the pipy overgrowth of weeds,
The ear can catch the rustle, and the
trees

And earth and air are listening. As I
lay,

Faintly, as in a dream, I seemed to
hear

A tender music, like the Æolian
chords,

Sound low within the woodland, whence
the stream,

Flowed full, yet silent. Long, with
ear to ground,

I hearkened ; and the sweet strain,
fuller grown,

Rounder and clearer came, and danced
along

In mirthful measure now, and now
grown grave

In dying falls, and sweeter and more
clear,

Tripping at nuptials and high revelry,
Wailing at burials, rapt in soaring
thoughts,

Chanting strange sea-tales full of
mystery,

Touching all chords of being, life and
death,

Now rose, now sank, and always was
divine,

So strange the music came.

Till, as I lay
Enraptured, shrill a sudden discord
rang,

Then all the sounds were still. A light-
ning-flash,

As from a sun-kissed gem, revealed the
wood.

A noise of water smitten, and on the
heights

A fair white fleece of cloud, which
swiftly climbed

Into the furthest heaven. Then, as I
mused,

Knowing a parting goddess, straight I
saw

A wayward splendour float upon the
stream,

And knew it for this jewelled flute,
which paused

Before me on an eddy. It I snatched
Eager, and to my ardent lips I bore
The wonder, and behold, with the first
breath—

The first warm human breath, the silent
strains,

The half-drowned notes which late the
goddess blew,

Revived, and sounded clearer, sweeter
far

Than mortal skill could make. So with
delight

I left my flocks to wander o'er the
 wastes
 Untended, and the wolves and eagles
 seized
 The tender lambs, but I was for my
 art—
 Nought else; and though the high-
 pitched notes divine
 Grew faint, yet something lingered, and
 at last
 So sweet a note I sounded of my skill,
 That all the Phrygian highlands, all
 the far
 Hill villages, were fain to hear the
 strain,
 Which the mad shepherd made.
 So, overbold,
 And rapt in my new art, at last I dared
 To challenge Phœbus' self.
 'Twas a fair day
 When sudden, on the mountain side, I
 saw
 A train of fleecy clouds in a white
 band
 Descending. Down the gleaming
 pinnacles
 And difficult crags they floated, and the
 arch,
 Drawn with its thousand rays against
 the sun,
 Hung like a glory o'er them. Midst
 the pines
 They clothed themselves with form, and
 straight I knew
 The immortals. Young Apollo, with
 his lyre,
 Kissed by the sun, and all the Muses
 clad
 In robes of gleaming white; then a
 great fear,
 Yet mixed with joy, assailed me, for I
 knew
 Myself a mortal equalled with the gods.

Ah me! how fair they were! how
 fair and dread
 In face and form, they showed, when
 now they stayed
 Upon the thymy slope, and the young
 god
 Lay with his choir around him, beautiful
 And bold as Youth and Dawn! There
 was no cloud
 Upon the sky, nor any sound at all
 When I began my strain. No coward
 fear
 Of what might come restrained me;
 but an awe
 Of those immortal eyes and ears divine
 Looking and listening. All the earth
 seemed full
 Of ears for me alone—the woods, the
 fields,
 The hills, the skies were listening.
 Scarce a sound
 My flute might make; such subtle
 harmonies
 The silence seemed to weave round me
 and flout
 The half unuttered thought. Till last
 I blew,
 As now, a hesitating note, and lo!
 The breath divine, lingering on mortal
 lips,
 Hurried my soul along to such fair
 rhymes,
 Sweeter than wont, that swift I knew
 my life
 Rise up within me, and expand, and
 all
 The human, which so nearly is divine,
 Was glorified, and on the Muses'
 lips,
 And in their lovely eyes, I saw a
 fair
 Approval, and my soul in me was
 glad.

For all the strains I blew were strains
of love—
Love striving, love triumphant, love
that lies
Within belovèd arms, and wreathes his
locks
With flowers, and lets the world go by
and sings
Unheeding; and I saw a kindly gleam
Within the Muses' eyes, who were
indeed,
Women, though god-like.

But upon the face
Of the young Sun-god only haughty
scorn
Sate, and he swiftly struck his golden
lyre,
And played the Song of Life; and lo,
I knew
My strain, how earthy! Oh, to hear
the young
Apollo playing! and the hidden cells
And chambers of the universe displayed
Before the charmed sound! I seemed
to float
In some enchanted cave, where the
wave dips
In from the sunlit sea, and floods its
depths
With reflex hues of heaven. My soul
was rapt
By that I heard, and dared to wish no
more
For victory; and yet because the sound
Of music that is born of human breath
Comes straighter from the soul than any
strain
The hand alone can make; therefore I
knew,
With a mixed thrill of pity and delight,
The nine immortal Sisters hardly
touched
By that fine strain of music, as by mine,

And when the high lay trembled to its
close,
Still doubting.

Then upon the Sun-god's face
There passed a cold proud smile. He
swept his lyre
Once more, then laid it down, and with
clear voice,
The voice of godhead, sang. Oh,
ecstasy,
Oh happiness of him who once has
heard
Apollo singing! For his ears the sound
Of grosser music dies, and all the earth
Is full of subtle undertones, which
change
The listener and transform him. As
he sang—
Of what I know not, but the music
touched
Each chord of being—I felt my secret
life
Stand open to it, as the parched earth
yawns
To drink the summer rain; and at the
call
Of those refreshing waters, all my
thought
Stir from its dark and sunless depths,
and burst
Into sweet, odorous flowers, and from
their wells
Deep call to deep, and all the mystery
Of all that is, laid open. As he sang,
I saw the Nine, with lovely pitying
eyes,
Sign 'He has conquered.' Yet I felt
no pang
Of fear, only deep joy that I had heard
Such music while I lived, even though
it brought
Torture and death. For what were it
to lie

Sleek, crowned with roses, drinking
vulgar praise,
And surfeited with offerings, the dull
gift
Of ignorant hands—all which I might
have known—
To this diviner failure? Godlike 'tis
To climb upon the icy ledge, and fall
Where other footsteps dare not. So I
knew
My fate, and it was near.

For to a pine

They bound me willing, and with cruel
stripes
Tore me, and took my life.

But from my blood

Was born the stream of song, and on
its flow

My poor flute, to the clear swift river
borne,

Floated, and thence adown a lordlier
tide

Into the deep, wide sea. I do not
blame

Phœbus, or Nature which has set this
bar

Betwixt success and failure, for I know
How far high failure overleaps the
bound

Of low successes. Only suffering draws
The inner heart of song and can elicit
The perfumes of the soul. 'Twere not
enough

To fail, for that were happiness to
him

Who ever upward looks with reverent
eye

And seeks but to admire. So, since
the race

Of bards soars highest; as who seek to
show

Our lives as in a glass; therefore it
comes

That suffering weds with song, from
him of old,

Who solaced his blank darkness with
his lyre;

Through all the story of neglect and
scorn,

Necessity, sheer hunger, early death,
Which smite the singer still. Not only
those

Who keep clear accents of the voice
divine

Are honourable—they are happy, in-
deed,

Whate'er the world has held—but those
who hear

Some fair faint echoes, though the
crowd be deaf,

And see the white gods' garments on
the hills,

Which the crowd sees not, though they
may not find

Fit music for their thought; they too
are blest,

Not pitiable. Not from arrogant
pride

Nor over-boldness fail they who have
striven

To tell what they have heard, with
voice too weak

For such high message. More it is
than ease,

Palace and pomp, honours and luxuries,
To have seen white Presences upon the
hills,

To have heard the voices of the Eternal
Gods."

So spake he, and I seemed to look on
him,

Whose sad young eyes grow on us from
the page

Of his own verse: who did himself to
death:

Or whom the dullard slew : or whom
 the sea
 Rapt from us : and I passed without a
 word,
 Slow, grave, with many musings.

Then I came
 On one a maiden, meek with folded
 hands,
 Seated against a rugged face of cliff,
 In silent thought. Anon she raised her
 arms,
 Her gleaming arms, above her on the
 rock,
 With hands which clasped each other,
 till she showed
 As in a statue, and her white robe fell
 Down from her maiden shoulders, and
 I knew
 The fair form as it seemed chained to
 the stone
 By some invisible gyves, and named
 her name :
 And then she raised her frightened eyes
 to mine
 As one who, long expecting some great
 fear,
 Scarce sees deliverance come. But
 when she saw
 Only a kindly glance, a softer look
 Came in them, and she answered to my
 thought
 With a sweet voice and low.

“I did but muse
 Upon the painful past, long dead and
 done,
 Forgetting I was saved.

The angry clouds
 Burst always on the low flat plains, and
 swept

The harvest to the ocean ; all the land
 Was wasted. A great serpent from the
 deep,
 Lifting his horrible head above their
 homes,
 Devoured the children. And the people
 prayed
 In vain to careless gods.

On that dear land,
 Which now was turned into a sullen
 sea,

Gazing in safety from the stately towers
 Of my sire's palace, I, a princess, saw,
 Lapt in soft luxury, within my bower
 The wreck of humble homes come
 whirling by,
 The drowning, bleating flocks, the
 bellowing herds,
 The grain scarce husbanded by toiling
 hands

Upon the sunlit plain, rush to the sea,
 With floating corpses. On the rain-
 swept hills

The remnant of the people huddled
 close,

Homeless and starving. All my being
 was filled

With pity for them, and I joyed to
 give

What food and shelter and compas-
 sionate hands

Of woman might. I took the little
 ones

And clasped them shivering to the
 virgin breast

Which knew no other touch but theirs,
 and gave

Raiment and food. My sire, not stern
 to me,

Smiled on me as he saw. My gentle
 mother,

Who loved me with a closer love than
 binds

A mother to her son ; and sunned her-
 self
 In my fresh beauty, seeing in my young
 gaze
 Her own fair vanished youth ; doted on
 me,
 And fain had kept my eyes from the
 sad sights
 That pained them. But my heart was
 faint in me,
 Seeing the ineffable miseries of life,
 And that mysterious anger of the gods,
 And helpless to allay them. All in
 vain
 Were prayer and supplication, all in
 vain
 The costly victims steamed. The
 vengeful clouds
 Hid the fierce sky, and still the ruin
 came.
 And wallowing his grim length within
 the flood,
 Over the ravaged fields and homeless
 homes,
 The fell sea-monster raged, sating his
 jaws
 With blood and rapine.
 Then to the dread shrine
 Of Ammon went the priests, and
 reverend chiefs
 Of all the nation. White-robed, at
 their head,
 Went slow my royal sire. The oracle
 Spoke clear, not as oftentimes in words
 obscure,
 Ambiguous. And as we stood to meet
 The suppliants—she who bare me, with
 her head
 Upon my neck—we cheerful and with
 song
 Welcomed their swift return ; auguring
 well
 From such a quick-spiced mission.

But my sire
 Hid his face from me, and the crowd of
 priests
 And nobles looked not at us. And no
 word
 Was spoken till at last one drew a
 scroll
 And gave it to the queen, who straight-
 way swooned,
 Having read it, on my breast, and then
 I saw,
 I the young girl whose soft life scarcely
 knew
 Shadow of sorrow, I whose heart was
 full
 Of pity for the rest, what doom was
 mine.
 I think I hardly knew in that dread
 hour
 The fear that came anon ; I was trans-
 formed
 Into a champion of my race, made
 strong
 With a new courage, glorying to meet,
 In all the ecstasy of sacrifice,
 Death face to face. Some god, I know
 not who,
 O'erspread me, and despite my mother's
 tears
 And my stern father's grief, I met my
 fate
 Unshrinking.
 When the moon rose clear from cloud
 Once more again over the midnight sea,
 And that vast watery plain, where were
 before
 Hundreds of happy homes, and well-
 tilled fields,
 And purple vineyards ; from my father's
 towers
 The white procession went along the
 paths,

The high cliff paths, which well I loved
 of old,
 Among the myrtles. Priests with censers went
 And offerings, robed in white, and round their brows
 The sacred fillet. With his nobles walked
 My sire with breaking heart. My mother clung
 To me the victim, and the young girls went
 With wailing and with tears. A solemn strain
 The soft flutes sounded, as we went by night
 To a wild headland, rock-based in the sea.

There on a sea-worn rock, upon the verge,
 To some rude stanchions, high above my head,
 They bound me. Out at sea, a black reef rose,
 Washed by the constant surge, wherein a cave
 Harboured deep down the monster. The sad queen
 Would scarcely leave me, though the priests shrunk back
 In terror. Last, torn from my endless kiss,
 Swooning they bore her upwards. All my robe
 Fell from my lifted arms, and left displayed
 The virgin treasure of my breasts; and then
 The white procession through the moonlight streamed
 Upwards, and soon their soft flutes sounded low
 Upon the high lawns, leaving me alone.

There stood I in the moonlight, left alone
 Against the sea-worn rock. Hardly I knew,
 Seeing only the bright moon and summer sea,
 Which gently heaved and surged, and kissed the ledge
 With smooth warm tides, what fate was mine. I seemed,
 Soothed by the quiet, to be resting still
 Within my maiden chamber, and to watch
 The moonlight thro' my lattice. Then again
 Fear came, and then the pride of sacrifice
 Filled me, as on the high cliff lawns I heard
 The wailing cries, the chanted liturgies,
 And knew me bound forsaken to the rock,
 And saw the monster-haunted depths of sea.

So all night long upon the sandy shores
 I heard the hollow murmur of the wave,
 And all night long the hidden sea caves made
 A ghostly echo; and the sea birds mewed
 Around me; once I heard a mocking laugh,
 As of some scornful Nereid; once the waters
 Broke louder on the scarpèd reefs, and ebbed
 As if the monster coming; but again
 He came not, and the dead moon sank, and still
 Only upon the cliffs the wails, the chants,

And I forsaken on my sea-worn rock,
And lo, the monster-haunted depths of
sea.

Till at the dead dark hour before the
dawn,
When sick men die, and scarcely fear
itself

Bore up my weary eyelids, a great surge
Burst on the rock, and slowly, as it
seemed,

The sea sucked downward to its depths,
laid bare

The hidden reefs, and then before my
eyes—

Oh, terrible ! a huge and loathsome
snake

Lifted his dreadful crest and scaly side
Above the wave, in bulk and length so
large,

Coil after hideous coil, that scarce the
eye

Could measure its full horror ; the great
jaws

Dropped as with gore ; the large and
furious eyes

Were fired with blood and lust. Nearer
he came,

And slowly, with a devilish glare, more
near,

Till his hot fœtor choked me, and his
tongue,

Forked horribly from out his poisonous
jaws,

Played lightning-like around me. For
awhile

I swooned, and when I knew my life
again,

Death's bitterness was past.

Then with a bound
Leaped up the broad red sun above the
sea,

And lit the horrid fulgour of his scales,

And struck upon the rock ; and as I
turned

My head in the last agony of death,
I knew a brilliant sunbeam swiftly
leaping

Downward from crag to crag, and felt
new hope

Where all was hopeless. On the hills
a shout

Of joy, and on the rocks the ring of
mail ;

And while the hungry serpent's gloating
eyes

Were fixed on me, a knight in casque
of gold

And blazing shield, who with his flash-
ing blade

Fell on the monster. Long the conflict
raged,

Till all the rocks were red with blood
and slime,

And yet my champion from those
horrible jaws

And dreadful coils was scatheless. Zeus
his sire

Protected, and the awful shield he
bore

Withered the monster's life and left him
cold ;

Dragging his helpless length and
grovelling crest :

And o'er his glaring eyes the films of
death

Crept, and his writhing flank and hiss
of hate

The great deep swallowed down, and
blood and spume

Rose on the waves ; and a strange
wailing cry

Resounded o'er the waters, and the
sea

Bellowed within its hollow-sounding
caves.

Then knew I, I was saved, and with
me all
The people. From my wrists he loosed
the gyves,
My hero ; and within his godlike arms
Bore me by slippery rock and difficult
path,
To where my mother prayed. There
was no need
To ask my love. Without a spoken
word
Love lit his fires within me. My young
heart
Went forth, Love calling, and I gave
him all.

Dost thou then wonder that the
memory
Of this supreme brief moment lingers
still,
While all the happy uneventful years
Of wedded life, and all the fair young
growth
Of offspring, and the tranquil later joys,
Nay, even the fierce eventful fight which
raged
When we were wedded, fade and are
deceased,
Lost in the irrecoverable past ?
Nay, 'tis not strange. Always the
memory
Of overwhelming perils or great joys,
Avoided or enjoyed, writes its own
trace
With such deep characters upon our
lives,
That all the rest are blotted. In this
place,
Where is not action, thought, or count
of time,
It is not weary as it were on earth,
To dwell on these old memories. Time
is born

Of dawns and sunsets, days that wax
and wane
And stamp themselves upon the yielding
face
Of fleeting human life ; but here there is
Morning nor evening, act nor suffering,
But only one unchanging Present holds
Our being suspended. One blest day
indeed,
Or centuries ago or yesterday,
There came among us one who was
Divine,
Not as our gods, joyous and breathing
strength
And careless life, but crowned with a
new crown
Of suffering, and a great light came
with him,
And with him he brought Time and a
new sense
Of dim, long-vanished years ; and since
he passed
I seem to see new meaning in my fate,
And all the deeds I tell of. Evermore
The young life comes, bound to the
cruel rocks
Alone. Before it the unfathomed sea
Smiles, filled with monstrous growths
that wait to take
Its innocence. Far off the voice and
hand
Of love kneel by in agony, and entreat
The seeming careless gods. Still when
the deep
Is smoothest, lo, the deadly fangs and
coils
Lurk near, to smite with death. And
down the crags
Of Duty, like a sudden sunbeam, springs
Some golden soul half mortal, half
divine,
Heaven-sent, and breaks the chain ; and
evermore

For sacrifice they die, through sacrifice
They live, and are for others, and no
grief

Which smites the humblest but rever-
berates

Thro' all the close-set files of life, and
takes

The princely soul that from its royal
towers

Looks down and sees the sorrow.

Sir, farewell!

If thou shouldst meet my children on
the earth

Or here, for maybe it is long ago

Since I and they were living, say to
them

I only muse a little here, and wait
The waking."

And her lifted arms sank down
Upon her knees, and as I passed I saw
her

Gazing with soft rapt eyes, and on her
lips

A smile as of a saint.

And then I saw

A manly hunter pace along the lea,
His bow upon his shoulder, and his
spear

Poised idly in his hand: the face and
form

Of vigorous youth; but in the full
brown eyes

A timorous gaze as of a hunted hart,
Brute-like, yet human still, even as the
Faun

Of old, the dumb brute passing into
man,

And dowered with double nature. As
he came

I seemed to question of his fate, and he
Answered me thus:

"'Twas one hot afternoon

That I, a hunter, wearied with my day,
Heard my hounds baying fainter on
the hills,

Led by the flying hart; and when the
sound

Faded and all was still, I turned to seek,
O'ercome by heat and thirst, a little
glade,

Beloved of old, where, in the shadowy
wood,

The clear cold crystal of a mossy pool
Lipped the soft emerald marge, and
gave again

The flower-starred lawn where oft-times
overspent

I lay upon the grass and careless bathed
My limbs in the sweet lymph.

But as I neared

The hollow, sudden through the leaves
I saw

A throng of wood-nymphs fair, sporting
undraped

Round one, a goddess. She with timid
hand

Loosened her zone, and glancing round
let fall

Her robe from neck and bosom, pure
and bright,

(For it was Dian's self I saw, none
else)

As when she frees her from a fleece of
cloud

And swims along the deep blue sea of
heaven

On sweet June nights. Silent awhile I
stood,

Rooted with awe, and fain had turned
to fly,

But feared by careless footstep to
affright

Those chaste cold eyes. Great awe
and reverence
Held me, and fear; then Love with
passing wing
Fanned me, and held my eyes, and
checked my breath,
Signing 'Beware!'

So for a time I watched,
Breathless as one a brooding nightmare
holds,
Who fleeth some great fear, yet fleeth
not;
Till the last flutter of lawn, and veil no
more
Obscured, and all the beauty of my
dreams
Assailed my sense. But ere I raised
my eyes,
As one who fain would look and see
the sun,
The first glance dazed my brain. Only
I knew
The perfect outline flow in tender
curves,
To break in doubled charms; only a
haze
Of creamy white, and dimpled depths
divine:
And then no more. For lo! a sudden
chill,
And such thick mist as shuts the hills
at eve,
Oppressed me gazing; and a heaven-
sent shame,
An awe, a fear, a reverence for the
unknown,
Froze all the springs of will and left
me cold,
And blinded all the longings of my eyes,
Leaving such dim reflection still as
mocks
Him who has looked on a great light,
and keeps

On his closed eyes the image. Pre-
sently,
My fainting soul, safe hidden for awhile
Deep in Life's mystic shades, renewed
herself,
And straight, the innocent brute within
the man

Bore on me, and with half-averted eye
I gazed upon the secret.

As I looked,
A radiance, white as beamed the frosty
moon
On the mad boy and slew him, beamed
on me;
Made chill my pulses, checked my life
and heat;
Transformed me, withered all my soul,
and left
My being burnt out. For lo! the
dreadful eyes
Of Godhead met my gaze, and through
the mask
And thick disguise of sense, as through
a wood,
Pierced to my life. Then suddenly I
knew
An altered nature, touched by no desire
For that which showed so lovely, but
declined
To lower levels. Nought of fear or awe,
Nothing of love was mine. Wide-eyed
I gazed,
But saw no spiritual beam to blight
My brain with too much beauty, no
undraped
And awful majesty; only a brute,
Dumb charm, like that which draws
the brute to it,
Unknowing it is drawn. So gradually
I knew a dull content o'ercloud my
sense,
And unabashed I gazed, like that dumb
bird

Which thinks no thought and speaks
no word, yet fronts
The sun that blinded Homer—all my
fear
Sunk with my shame, in a base happi-
ness.

But as I gazed, and careless turned
and passed
Through the thick wood, forgetting
what had been,
And thinking thoughts no longer, swift
there came
A mortal terror : voices that I knew,
My own hounds' bayings that I loved
before,
As with them often o'er the purple hills
I chased the flying hart from slope to
slope,
Before the slow sun climbed the
Eastern peaks,
Until the swift sun smote the Western
plain ;
Whom often I had cheered by voice
and glance,
Whom often I had checked with hand
and thong,
Grim followers, like the passions, firing
me ;
True servants, like the strong nerves,
urging me
On many a fruitless chase, to find and
take
Some too swift-fleeting beauty ; faithful
feet
And tongues, obedient always : these
I knew,
Clothed with a new-born force and
fiercer grown,
And stronger than their master ; and
I thought,
What if they tare me with their jaws,
nor cared

That once I ruled them,—brute pur-
suing brute,
And I the quarry ? Then I turned and
fled,—
If it was I indeed that feared and fled—
Down the long glades, and through the
tangled brakes,
Where scarce the sunlight pierced ;
fled on and on,
And panted, self-pursued. But ever-
more
The dissonant music which I knew so
sweet,
When by the windy hills, the echoing
vales,
And whispering pines it rang, now far,
now near,
As from my rushing steed I leant and
cheered
With voice and horn the chase—this
brought to me
Fear of I knew not what, which bade
me fly,
Fly always, fly ; but when my heart
stood still,
And all my limbs were stiffened as I fled,
Just as the white moon ghost-like
climbed the sky,
Nearer they came and nearer, baying
loud,
With bloodshot eyes and red jaws
dripping foam ;
And when I strove to check their
savagery,
Speaking with words ; no voice articu-
late came,
Only a dumb, low bleat. Then all the
throng
Leapt swift on me, and tare me as I lay,
And left me man again.
Wherefore I walk
Along these dim fields peopled with
the ghosts

Of heroes who have left the ways of
earth
For this faint ghost of them. Some-
times I think,
Pondering on what has been, that all
my days
Were shadows, all my life an allegory ;
And, though I know sometimes some
fainter gleam
Of the old beauty move me, and some-
times
Some beat of the old pulses ; that my
fate,
For ever hurrying on in hot pursuit,
To fall at length self-slain, was but a
tale
Writ large by Zeus upon a mortal life,
Writ large, and yet a riddle. For
sometimes
I read its meaning thus : Life is a chase,
And Man the hunter, always following
on,
With hounds of rushing thought or
fiery sense,
Some hidden truth or beauty, fleeting
still
For ever through the thick-leaved
coverts deep
And wind-worn wolds of time. And
if he turn
A moment from the hot pursuit to seize
Some chance-brought sweetness, other
than the search
To which his soul is set,—some dal-
liance,
Some outward shape of Art, some
lower love,
Some charm of wealth and sleek con-
tent and home,—
Then, if he check an instant, the swift
chase
Of fierce untempered energies which
pursue,

With jaws unsated and a thirst for act,
Bears down on him with clanging
shock, and whelms
His prize and him in ruin.

And sometimes
I seem to myself a thinker, who at last,
Amid the chase and capture of low ends,
Pausing by some cold well of hidden
thought

Comes on some perfect truth, and
looks and looks

Till the fair vision blinds him. And
the sun

Of all his lower self pursuing him,
The strong brute forces, the unchecked
desires,

Finding him bound and speechless,
deem him now

No more their master, but some soul-
less thing ;

And leap on him, and seize him, and
possess

His life, till 'through death's gate he
pass to life,

And, his own ghost, revives. But
looks no more

Upon the truth unveiled, save through
a cloud

Of creed and faith and longing, which
shall change

One day to perfect knowledge.

But whoe'er
Shall read the riddle of my life, I walk
In this dim land amid dim ghosts of
kings,

As one day thou shalt ; meantime, fare
thou well."

Then passed he ; and I marked him
slowly go

Along the winding ways of that weird
land,

And vanish in a wood.

And next I knew
 A woman perfect as a young man's
 dream,
 And breathing as it seemed the nimble
 air
 Of the fair days of old, when man was
 young
 And life an Epic. Round the lips a
 smile
 Subtle and deep and sweet as hers who
 looks
 From the old painter's canvas, and
 derides
 Life and the riddle of things, the aim-
 less strife,
 The folly of Love, as who has proved
 it all,
 Enjoyed and suffered. In the lovely
 eyes
 A weary look, no other than the gaze
 Which oftentimes as the rapid chariot
 whirls,
 And oftentimes by the glaring midnight
 streets,
 Gleams out and chills our thought.
 And yet not guilt
 Nor sorrow was it; only weariness,
 No more, and still most lovely. As I
 named
 Her name in haste, she looked with
 half surprise,
 And thus she seemed to speak :
 "What? Dost thou know,
 Thou too, the fatal glances which be-
 guiled
 Those strong rude chiefs of old? Has
 not the gloom
 Of this dim land withdrawn from out
 mine eyes

The glamour which once filled them?
 Does my cheek
 Retain the round of youth and still
 defy
 The wear of immemorial centuries?
 And this low voice, long silent, keeps
 it still
 The music of old time? Aye, in thine
 eyes
 I read it, and within thine eyes I see
 Thou knowest me, and the story of my
 life
 Sung by the blind old bard when I was
 dead,
 And all my lovers dust. I know thee
 not,
 Thee nor thy gods, yet would I soothly
 swear
 I was not all to blame for what has
 been,
 The long fight, the swift death, the
 woes, the tears,
 The brave lives spent, the humble
 homes uptorn,
 To gain one poor fair face. It was
 not I
 That curved these lips into this subtle
 smile,
 Or gave these eyes their fire, nor yet
 made round
 This supple frame. It was not I, but
 Love,
 Love mirroring himself in all things
 fair,
 Love that projects himself upon a life,
 And dotes on his own image.
 Ah! the days.
 The weary years of Love and feasts and
 gold,
 The hurried flights, the din of clatter-
 ing hoofs
 At midnight, when the heroes dared
 for me,

And bore me o'er the hills ; the swift pursuits	Hunger, and plague, and every phase of woe
Baffled and lost ; or when from isle to isle	Vexed all the land for me. I have heard the curse
The high-oared galley spread its wings and rose	Unspoken, when the wife widowed for me
Over the swelling surges, and I saw, Time after time, the scarce familiar town,	Clasped to her heart her orphans starved for me ;
The shadowy hills, the well-loved palaces,	As I swept proudly by. I have prayed the gods,
The gleaming temples fade, and all for me,	Hating my own fair face which wrought such woe,
Me the dead prize, the shell, the soul- less ghost,	Some plague divine might light on it and leave
The husk of a true woman ; the fond words	My curse a ruin. Yet I think indeed They had not cursed but pitied, those true wives
Wasted on careless ears, that feigned to hear,	Who mourned their humble lords, and straining felt
Of love to me unloving ; the rich feasts, The silken dalliance and soft luxury,	The innocent thrill which swells the mother's heart
The fair observance and high reverence For me who cared not, to whatever land	Who clasps her growing boy ; had they but known
My kingly lover snatched me. I have known	The lifeless life, the pain of hypocrite smiles,
How small a fence Love sets between the king	The dead load of caresses simulated, When Love stands shuddering by to see his fires
And the strong hind, who breeds his brood, and dies	Lit for the shrine of gold. What if they felt
Upon the field he tills. I have ex- changed	The weariness of loveless love which grew
People for people, crown for glittering crown,	And through the jealous palace portals seized
Through every change a queen, and held my state	The caged unloving woman, sick of toys,
Hateful, and sickened in my soul to lie Stretched on soft cushions to the lutes' low sound,	Sick of her gilded chains, her ease, herself,
While on the wasted fields the clang of arms	Till for sheer weariness she flew to mee Some new unloved seducer? What if they knew
Rang, and the foemen perished, and swift death,	No childish loving hands, or worse than all,

Had borne them sullen to a sire un-
loved,
And left them without pain? I might
have been,
I too, a loving mother and chaste wife,
Had Fate so willed.

For I remember well
How one day straying from my father's
halls
Seeking anemones and violets,
A girl in Spring-time, when the heart
makes Spring
Within the budding bosom, that I
came
Of a sudden through a wood upon a
bay,
A little sunny land-locked bay, whose
banks
Sloped gently downward to the yellow
sand,
Where the blue wave creamed soft
with fairy foam,
And oft the Nereids sported. As I
strayed
Singing, with fresh-pulled violets in my
hair
And bosom, and my hands were full of
flowers,
I came upon a little milk-white lamb,
And took it in my arms and fondled it,
And wreathed its neck with flowers,
and sang to it
And kissed it, and the Spring was in
my life,
And I was glad.

And when I raised my eyes
Behold, a youthful shepherd with his
crook
Stood by me and regarded as I lay,
Tall, fair, with clustering curls, and
front that wore
A budding manhood. As I looked a
fear

Came o'er me, lest he were some youth-
ful god
Disguised in shape of man, so fair he
was;
But when he spoke, the kindly face was
full
Of manhood, and the large eyes full of
fire
Drew me without a word, and all the
flowers
Fell from me, and the little milk-white
lamb
Strayed through the brake, and took
with it the white
Fair years of childhood. Time fulfilled
my being
With passion like a cup, and with one
kiss
Left me a woman.

Ah! the precious hours,
When on the warm bank crowned with
flowers we sate
And thought no harm, and his thin
reed pipe made
Low music, and no witness of our love
Intruded, but the tinkle of the flock
Stole from the hill, and 'neath the
odorous shade
We dreamed away the day, and watched
the waves
Smile shoreward, and beyond the
sylvan capes
The innumerable laughter of the sea!

Ah youth and love! So passed the
happy days
Till twilight, and I stole as in a dream
Homeward, and lived as in a happy
dream,
And when they spoke answered as in a
dream,
And through the darkness saw, as in a
glass,

The happy, happy day, and thrilled and
 glowed
 And kept my love in sleep, and longed
 for dawn
 And scarcely stayed for hunger, and
 with morn
 Stole eager to the little wood, and fed
 My life with kisses. Ah! the joyous
 days
 Of innocence, when Love was Queen
 in heaven,
 And nature unproved! Break they
 then still,
 Those azure circles, on a golden shore?
 Smiles there no glade upon the older
 earth
 Where spite of all, gray wisdom, and
 new gods,
 Young lovers dream within each other's
 arms
 Silent, by shadowy grove, or sunlit sea?

 Ah days too fair to last! There
 came a night
 When I lay longing for my love, and
 knew
 Sudden the clang of hoofs, the broken
 doors,
 The clash of swords, the shouts, the
 groans, the stain
 Of red upon the marble, the fixed gaze
 Of dead and dying eyes,—that was the
 time
 When first I looked on death,—and
 when I woke
 From my deep swoon, I felt the night
 air cool
 Upon my brow, and the cold stars look
 down,
 As swift we galloped o'er the darkling
 plain;
 And saw the chill sea glimpses slowly
 wake,

With arms unknown around me. When
 the dawn
 Broke swift, we panted on the pathless
 steeps,
 And so by plain and mountain till we
 came
 To Athens, where they kept me till I
 grew
 Fairer with every year, and many
 wooed,
 Heroes and chieftains, but I loved not
 one.

 And then the avengers came and
 snatched me back
 To Sparta. All the dark high-crested
 chiefs
 Of Argos wooed me, striving king
 with king
 For one fair foolish face, nor knew I
 kept
 No heart to give them. Yet since I
 was grown
 Weary of honeyed words and suit of
 love,
 I wedded a brave chief, dauntless and
 true.
 But what cared I? I could not prize
 at all
 His honest service. I had grown so
 tired
 Of loving and of love, that when they
 brought
 News that the fairest shepherd on the
 hills,
 Having done himself to death for his
 lost love,
 Lay, like a lovely statue, cold and white
 Upon the golden sand, I hardly knew
 More than a passing pang. Love, like
 a flower,
 Love, springing up too tall in a young
 breast,

The growth of morning, Life's too
scorching sun
Had withered long ere noon. Love,
like a flame
On his own altar offering up my heart,
I had burnt my being to ashes.

Was it love
That drew me then to Paris? He was
fair,

I grant you, fairer than a summer morn,
Fair with a woman's fairness, yet in
arms

A hero, but he never had my heart,
Not love for him allured me, but the
thirst

For freedom, if in more than thought I
erred,

And was not rapt but willing. For my
child

Born to an unloved father, loved me
not,

The fresh sea called, the galleys plunged,
and I

Fled willing from my prison and the
pain

Of undesired caresses, and the wind
Was fair, and on the third day as we
sailed,

My heart was glad within me when I
saw

The towers of Ilium rise beyond the
wave.

Ah, the long years, the melancholy
years,

The miserable melancholy years!

For soon the new grew old, and then I
grew

Weary of him, of all, of pomp and
state

And novel splendour. Yet at times I
knew

Some thrill of pride within me as I saw

From those high walls, a prisoner and
a foe,

The swift ships flock at anchor in the
bay,

The hasty landing and the flash of arms,
The lines of royal tents upon the plain,
The close-shut gates, the chivalry within
Issuing in all its pride to meet the shock
Of the bold chiefs without; so year by
year

The haughty challenge from the warring
hosts

Rang forth, and I with a divided heart
Saw victory incline, now here, now
there,

And helpless marked the Argive chiefs
I knew,

The spouse I left, the princely loves of
old,

Now with each other strive, and now
with Troy:

The brave pomp of the morn, the fair
strong limbs,

The glittering panoply, the bold young
hearts,

Athirst for fame of war, and with the
night

The broken spear, the shattered helm,
the plume

Dyed red with blood, the ghastly dying
face,

And nerveless limbs laid lifeless. And
I knew

The stainless Hector whom I could
have loved,

But that a happy love made blind his
eyes

To all my baleful beauty; fallen and
dragged

His noble, godlike head upon the sand
By young Achilles' chariot; him in turn
Fallen and slain; my fair false Paris
slain;

Plague, famine, battle, raging now
within,

And now without, for many a weary
year,

Summer and winter, till I loathed to
live,

Who was indeed, as well they said, the
Hell

Of men, and fleets, and cities. As I
stood

Upon the walls, ofttimes a longing
came,

Looking on rage, and fight, and blood,
and death,

To end it all, and dash me down and
die ;

But no god helped me. Nay, one day
I mind

I would entreat them. ' Pray you,
lords, be men.

What fatal charm is this which Até
gives

To one poor foolish face? Be strong,
and turn

In peace, forget this glamour, get you
home

With all your fleets and armies, to the
land

I love no longer, where your faithful
wives

Pine widowed of their lords, and your
young boys

Grow wild to manhood. I have nought
to give,

No heart, nor prize of love for any
man,

Nor recompense. I am the ghost alone
Of the fair girl ye knew ; she still

abides,
If she still lives and is not wholly dead,

Stretched on a flowery bank upon the
sea

In fair heroic Argos. Leave this form

That is no other than the outward shell
Of a once loving woman.'

As I spake,
My pity fired my eyes and flushed my
cheek

With some soft charm ; and as I spread
my hands,

The purple, glancing down a little, left
The marble of my breasts and one pink
bud

Upon the gleaming snows. And as I
looked

With a mixed pride and terror, I beheld
The brute rise up within them, and my
words

Fall barren on them. So I sat apart,
Nor ever more looked forth, while every
day

Brought its own woe.
The melancholy years,

The miserable melancholy years,
Crept onward till the midnight terror
came,

And by the glare of burning streets I
saw

Palace and temple reel in ruin and fall,
And the long-baffled legions, bursting
in

By gate and bastion, blunted sword and
spear

With unresisted slaughter. From my
tower

I saw the good old king ; his kindly
eyes

In agony, and all his reverend hairs
Dabbled with blood, as the fierce
foeman thrust

And stabbed him as he lay ; the youths,
the girls,

Whom day by day I knew, their silken
case

And royal luxury changed for blood
and tears,

Haled forth to death or worse. Then
 a great hate
 Of life and fate seized on me, and I
 rose
 And rushed among them, crying, 'See,
 'tis I,
 I who have brought this evil ! Kill me !
 kill
 The fury that is I, yet is not I !
 And let my soul go outward through
 the wound
 Made clean by blood to Hades ! Let
 me die,
 Not these who did no wrong !' But
 not a hand
 Was raised, and all shrank back amazed,
 afraid,
 As from a goddess. Then I swooned
 and fell
 And knew no more, and when I woke
 I felt
 My husband's arms around me, and the
 wind
 Blew fair for Greece, and the beaked
 galley plunged ;
 And where the towers of Ilium rose of
 old,
 A pall of smoke above a glare of fire.

What then in the near future ?

Ten long years

Bring youth and love to that deep
 summer-tide
 When the full noisy current of our
 lives
 Creeps dumb through wealth of flowers.
 I think I knew
 Somewhat of peace at last, with my
 good Lord
 Who loved too much, to palter with
 the past,
 Flushed with the present. Young Her-
 mione

Had grown from child to woman. She
 was wed ;
 And was not I her mother ? At the
 pomp
 Of solemn nuptials and requited love,
 I prayed she might be happy, happier
 far
 Than ever I was ; so in tranquil ease
 I lived a queen long time, and because
 wealth
 And high observance can make sweet
 our days
 When youth's swift joy is past, I did
 requite
 With what I might, not love, the
 kindly care
 Of him I loved not ; pomps and robes
 of price
 And chariots held me. But when Fate
 cut short
 His life and love, his sons who were
 not mine
 Reigned in his stead, and hated me
 and mine :
 And knowing I was friendless, I sailed
 forth
 Once more across the sea, seeking for
 rest
 And shelter. Still I knew that in my
 eyes
 Love dwelt, and all the baleful charm
 of old
 Burned as of yore, scarce dimmed as
 yet by time :
 I saw it in the mirror of the sea,
 I saw it in the youthful seamen's
 eyes,
 And was half proud again I had such
 power
 Who now kept nothing else. So one
 calm eve,
 Behold, a sweet fair isle blushed like a
 rose

Upon the summer sea : there my swift
ship
Cast anchor, and they told me it was
Rhodes.

There, in a little wood above the sea,
Like that dear wood of yore, I wandered
forth

Forlorn, and all my seamen were apart,
And I, alone ; when at the close of day
I knew myself surrounded by strange
churls

With angry eyes, and one who ordered
them,

A woman, whom I knew not, but who
walked

In mien and garb a queen. She, with
the fire

Of hate within her eyes, ' Quick, bind
her, men !

I know her ; bind her fast ! ' Then to
the trunk

Of a tall plane they bound me with
rude cords

That cut my arms. And meantime,
far below,

The sun was gilding fair with dying
rays

Isle after isle and purple wastes of sea.

And then she signed to them, and all
withdrew

Among the woods and left us, face to
face,

Two women. Ere I spake, ' I know,'
she cried,

' I know that evil fairness. This it
was,

Or ever he had come across my life,
That made him cold to me, who had
my love

And left me half a heart. If all my
life

Of wedlock was but half a life, what
fiend

Came 'twixt my love and me, but that
fair face ?

What left his children orphans, but
that face ?

And me a widow ? Fiend ! I have
thee now ;

Thou hast not long to live. I will
requite

Thy murders ; yet, oh fiend ! that art
so fair,

Were it not haply better to deface
Thy fatal loveliness, and leave thee
bare

Of all thy baleful power ? And yet I
doubt,

And looking on thy face I doubt the
more,

Lest all thy dower of beauty be the
gift

Of Aphrodité, and I fear to fight
Against the immortal Gods.'

Even with the word,

And she relenting, all the riddle of
life

Flashed through me, and the inextric-
able coil

Of Being, and the immeasurable depths
And irony of Fate, burst on my thought,
And left me smiling in the eyes of
death,

With this deep smile thou seest. Then
with a shriek

The woman leapt on me, and with
blind rage

Strangled my life. And when she had
done the deed

She swooned, and those her followers
hasting back

Fell prone upon their knees before the
corpse

As to a goddess. Then one went and brought
 A sculptor, and within a jewelled shrine
 They set me in white marble, bound to a tree
 Of marble. And they came and knelt to me,
 Young men and maidens, through the secular years,
 While the old gods bore sway, but I was here,
 And now they kneel no longer, for the world
 Has gone from beauty.

But I think, indeed,
 They well might worship still, for never yet
 Was any thought or thing of beauty born
 Except with suffering. That poor wretch who thought
 I injured her, stealing the foolish heart
 Which she prized but I could not, what knew she
 Of that I suffered? She had loved her love,
 Though unrequited, and had borne to him
 Children who loved her. What if she had been
 Loved yet unloving: all the fire of love
 Burnt out before love's time in one brief blaze
 Of passion. Ah, poor fool! I pity her,
 Being blest and yet unthankful, and forgive,
 Now that she is a ghost as I, the hand
 Which loosed my load of life. For scarce indeed
 Could any god who cares for mortal men
 Have ever kept me happy. I had tired
 Of simple loving, doubtless, as I tired

Of splendour and being loved. There be some souls
 For which love is enough, content to bear
 From youth to age, from chesnut locks to gray
 The load of common, uneventful life
 And penury. But I was not of these;
 I know not now, if it were best indeed
 That I had reared my simple shepherd brood,
 And lived and died unknown in some poor hut
 Among the Argive hills; or lived a queen
 As I did, knowing every day that dawned
 Some high emprise and glorious, and in death
 To fill the world with song. Not the same meed
 The gods mete out for all, or She, the dread
 Necessity, who rules both gods and men,
 Some to dishonour, some to honour moulds,
 To happiness some, some to unhappiness.
 We are what Zeus has made us, discords playing
 In the great music, but the harmony
 Is sweeter for them, and the great spheres ring
 In one accordant hymn.

But thou, if e'er
 There come a daughter of thy love, oh pray
 To all thy gods, lest haply they should mar
 Her life with too great beauty!"

So she ceased,
 The fairest woman that the poet's dream

Or artist hand has fashioned. All the
gloom
Seemed lightened round her, and I
heard the sound
Of her melodious voice when all was
still,
And the dim twilight took her.

Next there came

Two who together walked : one with
a lyre
Of gold, which gave no sound ; the
other hung
Upon his breast, and closely clung to
him,
Spent in a tender longing. As they
came,
I heard her gentle voice recounting o'er
Some ancient tale, and these the words
she said :

“Dear voice and lyre now silent,
which I heard
Across yon sullen river, bringing to me
All my old life, while he, the ferry-
man,
Heard and obeyed, and the grim
monster heard
And fawned on you. Joyous thou
cam’st and free
Like a white sunbeam from the dear
blithe earth,
Where suns shone clear, and moons
beamed bright, and streams
Laughed with a rippling music,—nor as
here
The dumb stream stole, the veiled sky
slept, the fields
Were lost in twilight. Like a truant
breeze,

Which steals in summer from the gates
of dawn
To kiss the fields of spice, and wakes
to life
Their slumbering perfume, through this
silent land
Of whispering voices and of half-closed
eyes,
Where scarce a footstep sounds, nor
any strain
Of earthly song, thou cam’st ; and
suddenly
The pale cheeks flushed a little, the
murmured words
Rose to a faint, thin treble ; the throng
of ghosts
Pacing along the sunless ways and
still,
Felt a new life. Thou camest, dear,
and straight
The dull cold river broke in sparkling
foam,
The pale and scentless flowers grew
perfumed ; last
To the dim chamber, where with the
sad queen
I sat in gloom, and silently inwove
Dead wreaths of amaranths ; thy music
came
Laden with life, and I, who seemed to
know
Not life’s voice only, but my own,
arose
Along the hollow pathways following
The sound which brought back earth
and life and love,
And memory and longing. Yet I went
With half-reluctant footsteps, as of
one
Whom passion draws, or some high
fantasy,
Despite himself, because some subtle
spell,

Part born of dread to cross that sullen
stream
And its grim guardians, part of secret
shame
Of the young airs and freshness of the
earth,
Being that I was, enchained me.
Then at last,
From voice and lyre so high a strain
arose
As trembled on the utter verge of
being,
And thrilling, poured out life. Thus
nearer drawn
I walked with thee, enclosed by
honeyed sound
And soft environments of harmony,
Beyond the ghostly gates, beyond the
dim
Calm fields, where the beetle hummed
and the pale owl
Stole noiseless from the copse, and the
white blooms
Stretched thin for lack of sun : so fair
a light
Offspring of consonant airs environed
me.
Nor looked I backward, as we seemed
to move
To some high goal of thought and life
and love,
Like twin birds flying fast with equal
wing
Out of the night, to meet the coming
sun
Above a sea. But on thy dear fair
eyes,
The eyes that well I knew on the old
earth,
I looked not, for with still averted
gaze
Thou leddest, and I followed ; for,
indeed,

While that high strain was sounding,
I was rapt
In faith and a high courage, driving out
All doubt and discontent and womanish
fear,
Nay, even love itself. But when awhile
It sank a little, or seemed to sink and
fall
To lower levels, seeing that use makes
blunt
The too accustomed ear, straightway,
desire
To look once more on thy recovered
eyes
Seized me, and oft I called with piteous
voice,
Beseeching thee to turn. But thou
long time
Wert even as one unmindful, with
grave sign
And waving hand, denying. At the
last,
When now we neared the stream, on
whose far shore
Lay life, great terror took me, and I
shrieked
Thy name, as in despair. Then thou,
as one
Who knows him set in some great
jeopardy,
A swift death fronting him on either
hand,
Didst slowly turning gaze ; and lo ! I
saw
Thine eyes grown awful, life that
looked on death,
Clear purity on black and cankered sin,
The immortal on corruption,—not the
eyes
That erst I knew in life, but dread-
fuller,
And stranger. As I looked, I seemed
to swoon,

Some blind force whirled me back, and
when I woke

I saw thee vanish in the middle stream,
A speck on the dull waters, taking
with thee

My life, and leaving Love with me.
But I

Not for myself bewail, but all for thee,
Who, but for me, wert now among the
stars

With thy great Lord ; I sitting at thy
feet :

But now the fierce and unrestrained rout
Of passions woman-natured, finding
thee

Scornful of love within thy lonely cell,
With blind rage falling on thee, tore
thy limbs,

And left them to the Muses' sepulture,
While thy soul dwells in Hades. But
I wail

My weakness always, who for Love
destroyed

The life that was my Love. I prithee,
dear,

Forgive me if thou canst, who hast lost
heaven

To save a loving woman."

He with voice

Sweeter than any mortal melody,
And plaintive as the music that is
made

By the Æolian strings, or the sad bird
That sings of summer nights :

"Eurydice,

Dear love, be comforted ; not once
alone

That which thou mournest is, but day
by day

Some lonely soul, which walks apart
and feeds

On high hill pastures, far from herds
of men,

Comes to the low fat fields, and sunny
vales

Joyous with fruits and flowers, and the
white arms

Of laughing love ; and there awhile he
stays

Content, forgetting all the joys he
knew,

When first the morning broke upon
the hills,

And the keen air breathed from the
Eastern gates

Like a pure draught of wine ; forget-
ting all

The strains which float, as from a
nearer heaven,

To him who treads at dawn the un-
trodden snows,

While all the warm world sleeps ;—
forgetting these

And all things that have been. And
if he gain

To raise to his own heights the simpler
souls

That dwell upon the plains, the un-
tutored thought,

The museless lives, the unawakened
brain

That yet might soar, then is he blest
indeed.

But if he fail, then, leaving love
behind,

The wider love of the race, the closer
love

Of some congenial soul, he turns again
To the old difficult steeps, and there
alone

Pines, till the widowed passions of his
heart

Tear him and rend his soul, and drive
him down

To the low plains he left. And there
he dwells,

Missing the nearer skies, and the white
 peaks,
 And the keen air of old ; but in their
 stead
 Finding the soft sweet sun of the vale,
 the clouds
 Which veil the heavens indeed, but
 give the rains
 That feed the streams of life and make
 earth green,
 And bring at last the harvest. So I
 walk
 In this dim land content with thee, O
 Love,
 Untouched by any yearning of regret
 For those old days ; nor that the lyre
 which made
 Erewhile such potent music now is
 dumb ;
 Nor that the voice that once could
 move the earth
 (Zeus speaking through it), speaks in
 household words
 Of homely love : Love is enough for
 me
 With thee, O dearest ; and perchance
 at last,
 Zeus willing, this dumb lyre and
 whispered voice
 Shall wake, by Love inspired, to such
 clear note
 As soars above the stars, and swelling,
 lifts
 Our souls to highest heaven.”
 Then he stooped,
 And, folded in one long embrace, they
 went
 And faded. And I cried, “ Oh, strong
 God, Love,
 Mightier than Death and Hell ! ”

And then I chanced
 On a fair woman, whose sad eyes were
 full
 Of a fixed self-reproach, like his who
 knows
 Himself the fountain of his grief, and
 pines
 In self-inflicted sorrow. As I spake
 Enquiring of her grief, she answered
 thus :
 “ Stranger, thou seest of all the
 shades below
 The most unhappy. Others sought
 their love
 In death, and found it, dying ; but for
 me
 The death that took me, took from
 me my love,
 And left me comfortless. No load I
 bear
 Like those dark wicked women, who
 have slain
 Their Lords for lust or anger, whom
 the dread
 Propitious Ones within the pit below
 Punish and purge of sin ; only unfaith,
 If haply want of faith be not a crime
 Blacker than murder, when we fail to
 trust
 One worthy of all faith, and folly bring
 No harder recompense than comes of
 scorn
 And loathing of itself.
 Ah, fool, fool, fool,
 Who didst mistrust thy love, who was
 the best,
 And truest, manliest soul with whom
 the gods
 Have ever blest the earth ; so brave,
 so strong,
 Fired with such burning hate of power-
 ful ill,

So loving of the race, so swift to raise
 The strenuous arm and ponderous club,
 and smite
 All monstrous growths with ruin—Zeus
 himself
 Showed scarce more mighty—and yet
 was the while
 A very man, not cast in mould too
 fine
 For human love, but ofttimes snared
 and caught
 By womanish wiles, fast held within
 the net
 His passions wove. Oh, it was joy to
 hear
 How he went forth, the champion of
 his race,
 Conquering in warfare as in love, now
 bent
 To more than human tasks, now lapt
 in ease,
 Now suffering, now enjoying. Strong,
 vast soul,
 Tuned to heroic deeds, and set on high
 Above the range of common petty
 sins—
 Too high to mate with an unequal
 soul,
 Too full of striving for contented days.

Ah me, how well I do recall the
 cause
 Of all our ills! I was a happy bride
 When that dark Até which pursues the
 steps
 Of heroes—innocent blood-guiltiness—
 Drove us to exile, and I joyed to be
 His own, and share his pain. To a
 swift stream
 Fleeing we came, where a rough ferry-
 man
 Waited, more brute than man. My
 hero plunged

In those fierce depths and battled with
 their flow,
 And with great labour gained the
 strand, and bade
 The monster speed me to him. But
 with lust
 And brutal cunning in his eyes, the
 thing
 Seized me and turned to fly with me,
 when swift
 An arrow hissed from the unerring bow,
 Pierced him, and loosed his grasp. Then
 as his eyes
 Grew glazed in death there came in
 them a gleam
 Of what I know was hate, and he said,
 ‘Take
 This white robe. It is costly. See,
 my blood
 Has stained it but a little. I did wrong :
 I know it, and repent me. If there
 come
 A time when he grows cold—for all the
 race
 Of heroes wander, nor can any love
 Fix theirs for long—take it and wrap
 him in it,
 And he shall love again.’ Then, from
 the strange
 Deep look within his eyes I shrank in
 fear,
 And left him half in pity, and I went
 To meet my Lord, who rose from that
 fierce stream
 Fair as a god.

Ah me, the weary days
 We women live, spending our anxious
 souls,
 Consumed with jealous fancies, hunger-
 ing still
 For the belovèd voice and ear and eye,
 And hungering all in vain! For life is
 more

To youthful manhood than to sit at
 home
 Before the hearth to watch the children's
 ways,
 And lead the life of petty household care
 Which doth content us women. Day
 by day
 I pined in Trachis for my love, while
 he,
 Now in some warlike exploit busied,
 now
 Slaying some monster, now at some
 fair court,
 Resting awhile till some new enterprise
 Called him, returned not. News of
 treacheries
 Avenged, friends succoured, dreadful
 monsters slain,
 Came from him: always triumph,
 always fame,
 And honour, and success, and reverence,
 And sometimes, words of love for me
 who pined
 For more than words, and would have
 gone to him
 But that the toils of such high errantry
 Asked more than woman's strength.
 So the slow years
 Vexed me alone in Trachis, left forlorn
 In solitude, nor hearing at the gate
 The frank and cheering voice, nor on
 the stair
 The heavy tread, nor feeling the strong
 arm
 Around me in the darkling night, when
 all
 My being ran slow. Last, subtle
 whispers came
 Of womanish wiles which kept my Lord
 from me,
 And one who, young and fair, a fresh-
 blown life
 And virgin, younger, fairer far than I

When first he loved me, held him in
 the toils
 Of scarce dissembled love. Not easily
 Might I believe this evil, but at last
 The oft-repeated malice finding me
 Forlorn, and sitting imp-like at my ear,
 Possessed me, and the fire of jealous
 love
 Raged through my veins, not turned as
 yet to hate—
 Too well I loved for that—but breeding
 in me
 Unfaith in him. Love, setting him so
 high
 And self so low, betrayed me, and I
 prayed,
 Constrained to hold him false, the
 immortal gods
 To make him love again.
 But still he came not.
 And still the maddening rumours
 worked, and still
 'Fair, young, and a king's daughter,'
 the same words
 Smote me and pierced me. Oh, there
 is no pain
 In Hades—nay, nor deepest Hell itself,
 Like that of jealous hearts, the torture-
 pain
 Which racked my life so long.
 Till one fair morn
 There came a joyful message. 'He
 has come!
 And at the shrine upon the promontory,
 The fair white shrine upon the purple
 sea,
 He waits to do his solemn sacrifice
 To the immortal gods; and with him
 comes
 A young maid beautiful as Dawn.'
 Then I,
 Mingling despair with love, rapt in deep
 joy

That he was come, plunged in the
depths of hell
That she came too, bethought me of
the robe
The Centaur gave me, and the words
he spake,
Forgetting the deep hatred in his eyes,
And all but love, and sent a messenger
Bidding him wear it for the sacrifice
To the Immortals, knowing not at all
Whom Fate decreed the victim.

Shall my soul

Forget the agonized message which he
sent,

Bidding me come? For that accursed
robe,

Stained with the poisonous accursed
blood,

Even in the midmost flush of sacrifice
Clung to him a devouring fire, and ate
The piteous flesh from his dear limbs,
and stung

His great soft soul to madness. When
I came,

Knowing it was my work, he bent on
me,

Wise as a god through suffering and
the near

Inevitable Death, so that no word
Of mine was needed, such a tender look
Of mild reproach as smote me.
' Couldst not thou

Trust me, who never loved as I love
thee?

What need was there of magical arts to
draw

The love that never wavered? I have
lived

As he lives who through perilous paths
must pass,

And lifelong trials, striving to keep down
The brute within him, born of too much
strength

And sloth and vacuous days; by diffi-
cult toils,

Labours endured, and hard-fought
fights with ill,

Now vanquished, now triumphant;
and sometimes,

In intervals of too long labour, finding
His nature grown too strong for him,
falls prone

Awhile a helpless prey, then once again
Rises and spurns his chains, and fares
anew

Along the perilous ways. Dearest, I
would

That thou wert wedded to some knight
who stayed

At home within thy gates, and were
content

To see thee happy. But for me the
fierce

Rude energies of life, the mighty thews,
The god-sent hate of Wrong, these
drove me forth

To quench the thirst of battle. See,
this maid,

This is the bride I destined for our son
Who grows to manhood. Do thou see
to her

When I am dead, for soon I know again
The frenzy comes, and with it ceasing,
death.

Go, therefore, ere I harm thee when
my strength

Has lost its guidance. Thou wert rich
in love,

Be now as rich in faith. Dear, for thy
wrong

I do forgive thee.'

When I saw the glare

Of madness fire his eyes, and my ears
heard

The groans the torture wrung from his
great soul,

I fled with broken heart to the white
 shrine,
 And knelt in prayer, but still my sad
 ear took
 The agony of his cries.

Then I who knew
 There was no hope in god or man for
 me
 Who had destroyed my Love, and with
 him slain
 The champion of the suffering race of
 men,
 And that my jealous soul, though
 innocent
 Of blood, was guilty of unfaith and vile
 Mistrust, and wrapt in weakness like a
 cloak,
 And made the innocent tool of hate
 and wrong,
 Against all love and good ; grown sick
 and filled
 With hatred of myself, rose from my
 knees,
 And went a little space apart, and found
 A gnarled tree on the cliff, and with
 my scarf
 Strangling myself, swung lifeless.

But in death
 I found him not. For, building a vast
 pile
 Of scented woods on Oeta, as they tell,
 My hero with his own hand lighted it,
 And when the mighty pyre flamed far
 and wide
 Over all lands and seas, he climbed
 on it
 And laid him down to die ; but pitying
 Zeus,
 Before the swift flames reached him, in
 a cloud
 Descending, snatched the strong brave
 soul to heaven,
 And set him mid the stars.

Therefore am I
 Of all the blameless shades within this
 place
 The most unhappy, if of blame, indeed,
 I bear no load. For what is Sin itself,
 But Error when we miss the road which
 leads
 Up to the gate of heaven? Ignorance !
 What if we be the cause of ignorance?
 Being blind who might have seen ! Yet
 do I know
 But self-inflicted pain, nor stain there is
 Upon my soul such as they bear who
 know
 The dreadful scourge with which the
 stern judge still
 Lashes their sins. I am forgiven, I
 know,
 Who loved so much, and one day, if
 Zeus will,
 I shall go free from hence, and join my
 Lord,
 And be with him again."

And straight I seemed,
 Passing, to look on some tormented life,
 Which knows to-day the irony of Fate
 In self-inflicted pain.

Together clung
 The ghosts whom next I saw, bound
 three in one
 By some invisible bond. A sire, of port
 God-like as Zeus, to whom on either
 hand
 A tender stripling clung. I knew them
 well,
 As all men know them. One fair youth
 spake low :
 "Father, it does not pain me now, to
 be

Drawn close to thee, and by a double
bond,
With this my brother." And the
other: "Nay,
Nor me, O father; but I bless the chain
Which binds our souls in union. If
some trace
Of pain still linger, heed it not—'tis
past:
Still let us cling to thee."

He with grave eyes
Full of great tenderness, upon his sons
Looked with the father's gaze, that is
so far
More sweet, and sad, and tender, than
the gaze
Of mothers,—now on this one, now on
that,
Regarding them. "Dear sons, whom
on the earth
I loved and cherished, it was hard to
watch
Your pain; but now 'tis finished, and
we stand
For ever, through all future days of time,
Symbols of patient suffering undeserved,
Endured and vanquished. Yet sad
memory still
Brings back our time of trial.

The young day
Broke fair when I, the dread Poseidon's
priest,
Joyous because the unholy strife was
done,
And seeing the blue waters now left free
Of hostile keels—save where upon the
verge
Far off the white sails faded—rose at
dawn,
And whiterobed, and in garb of sacrifice,
And with the sacred fillet round my
brows,
Stood at the altar; and behind, ye twain,

Decked by your mother's hand with
new-cleansed robes,
And with fresh flower-wreathed chaplets
on your curls,
Attended, and your clear young voices
made
Music that touched your father's eyes
with tears,
If not the careless gods. I seem to hear
Those high sweet accents mounting in
the hymn
Which rose to all the blessed gods who
dwelt
Upon the far Olympus—Zeus, the Lord,
And Sovereign Here, and the immortal
choir
Of Deities, but chiefly to the dread
Poseidon, him who sways the purple
sea
As with a sceptre, shaking the fixed
earth
With stress of thundering surges. By
the shrine
The meek-eyed victim, for the sacrifice,
Stood with his gilded horns. The
hymns were done,
And I in act to strike, when all the
crowd
Who knelt behind us, with a common
fear
Cried, with a cry that well might freeze
the blood,
And then, with fearful glances towards
the sea,
Fled, leaving us alone—me, the high
priest,
And ye, the acolytes; forlorn of men,
Alone, but with our god.
But we stirred not
We dared not fly, who in the solemn
act
Of worship, and the ecstasy which
comes

To the believer's soul, saw heaven
 revealed,
 The mysteries unveiled, the inner sky
 Which meets the enraptured gaze.
 How should we fear
 Who thus were god-encircled ! So we
 stood
 While the long ritual spent itself, nor
 cast
 An eye upon the sea. Till as I came
 To that great act which offers up a
 life
 Before life's Lord, and the full mystery
 Was trembling to completion, quick I
 heard
 A stifled cry of agony, and knew
 My children's voices. And the father's
 heart,
 Which is far more than rite or service
 done
 By man for god, seeing that it is divine
 And comes from God to men—this
 rising in me,
 Constrained me, and I ceased my prayer,
 and turned
 To succour you, and lo ! the awful
 coils
 Which crushed your lives already,
 bound me round
 And crushed me also, as you clung to
 me,
 In common death. Some god had
 heard the prayer,
 And lo ! we were ourselves the sacri-
 fice—
 The priest, the victim, the accepted
 life,
 The blood, the pain, the salutary loss.

Was it not better thus to cease and die
 Together in one blest moment, mid the
 flush
 And ecstasy of worship, and to know

Ourselves the victims ? They were
 wrong who taught
 That 'twas some jealous goddess thus
 assailed
 Our lives, revengeful for discovered
 wiles,
 Or hateful of our Troy. Not readily
 Should such base passions sway the
 immortal gods ;
 But rather do I hold it sooth indeed
 That Zeus himself it was, who pitying
 The ruin he foreknew, yet might not
 stay,
 Since mightier Fate decreed it, sent in
 haste
 Those dreadful messengers, and bade
 them take
 The pious lives he loved, before the
 din
 Of midnight slaughter woke, and the
 fair town
 Flamed pitifully to the skies, and all
 Was blood and ruin. Surely it was
 best
 To die as we did, and in death to live,
 A vision for all ages of high pain
 Which passes into beauty, and is
 merged
 In one accordant whole, as discords
 merge
 In that great Harmony which ceaseless
 rings
 From the tense chords of life, than to
 have lived
 Our separate lives, and died our separate
 deaths,
 And left no greater mark than drops
 which rain
 Upon the unwrinkled sea. Those hosts
 which fell
 Before the Scæan gate upon the sand,
 Nor found a bard to sing their fate, but
 left

Their bones to dogs and kites—were
 they more blest
 Than we who, in the people's sight
 before
 Ilium's unshattered towers, lay down
 to die
 Our swift miraculous death? Dear
 sons, and good,
 Dear children of my love, now doubly
 dear
 For this our common sorrow ; suffer-
 ing binds
 Not gyves of pain alone, but fashions
 for us
 A chain of purest gold, which though
 withdrawn
 Or felt no longer, knits 'tween soul and
 soul,
 Indissoluble bonds, and draws our
 lives
 So close, that though the individual life
 Be merged, there springs a common
 life which grows
 To such dread beauty, as has power to
 take
 The sting from sorrow, and transform
 the pain
 Into transcendent joy : as from the
 storm
 The unearthly rainbow draws its
 myriad hues
 And steeps the world in fairness. All
 our lives
 Are notes that fade and sink, and so
 are merged
 In the full harmony of Being. Dear
 sons,
 Cling closer to me. Life nor Death
 has torn
 Our lives asunder, as for some, but
 drawn
 Their separate strands together in a
 knot

Closer than Life itself, stronger than
 Death,
 Insoluble as Fate."

Then they three clung
 Together—the strong father and young
 sons,
 And in their loving eyes I saw the
 Pain
 Fade into Joy, Suffering in Beauty lost,
 And Death in Love !

By a still sullen pool,
 Into its dark depths gazing, lay the
 ghost
 Whom next I passed. In form, a
 comely youth,
 Scarce passed from boyhood. Golden
 curls were his,
 And wide blue eyes. The semblance
 of a smile
 Came on his lip—a girl's but for the
 down
 Which hardly shaded it ; but the pale
 cheek
 Was soft as any maiden's, and his robe
 Was virginal, and at his breast he bore
 The perfumed amber cup which, when
 March comes,
 Gems the dry woods and windy wolds,
 and speaks
 The resurrection.

Looking up, he said :
 " Methought I saw her then, my love,
 my fair,
 My beauty, my ideal ; the dim clouds
 Lifted, methought, a little—or was it
 Fond Fancy only? For I know that
 here
 No sunbeam cleaves the twilight, but
 a mist

Creeps over all the sky and fields and
pools,
And blots them ; and I know I seek in
vain
My earth-sought beauty, nor can Fancy
bring
An answer to my thought from these
blind depths
And unawakened skies. Yet has use
made
The quest so precious, that I keep it
here,
Well knowing it is vain.

On the old earth
'Twas otherwise, when in fair Thes-
saly
I walked regardless of all nymphs who
sought
My love, but sought in vain, whether
it were
Dryad or Naiad from the woods or
streams,
Or white-robed Oread fleeting on the
side
Of fair Olympus, echoing back my
sighs,
In vain, for through the mountains day
by day
I wandered, and along the foaming
brooks,
And by the pine-woods dry, and never
took
A thought for love, nor ever 'mid the
throng
Of loving nymphs who knew me beau-
tiful
I dallied, unregarding ; till they said
Some died for love of me, who loved
not one.
And yet I cared not, wandering still
alone
Amid the mountains by the scented
pines.

Till one fair day, when all the hills
were still,
Nor any breeze made murmur through
the boughs,
Nor cloud was on the heavens, I
wandered slow,
Leaving the nymphs who fain with
dance and song
Had kept me 'midst the glades, and
strayed away
Among the pines, enwrapt in fantasy,
And by the beechen dells which clothe
the feet
Of fair Olympus, wrapt in fantasy,
Weaving the thin and unembodied
shapes
Which Fancy loves to body forth, and
leave
In marble or in song ; and so strayed
down
To a low sheltered vale above the
plains,
Where the lush grass grew thick, and
the stream stayed
Its garrulous tongue ; and last upon
the bank
Of a still pool I came, where was no
flow
Of water, but the depths were clear as
air,
And nothing but the silvery gleaming
side
Of tiny fishes stirred. There lay I
down
Upon the flowery bank, and scanned
the deep,
Half in a waking dream.

Then swift there rose,
From those enchanted depths, a face
more fair
Than ever I had dreamt of, and I knew
My sweet long-sought ideal : the thick
curls,

Like these, were golden, and the white
robe showed

Like this ; but for the wondrous eyes
and lips,

The tender loving glance, the sunny
smile

Upon the rosy mouth, these knew I
not,

Not even in dreams ; and yet I seemed
to trace

Myself within them too, as who should
find

His former self expunged, and him
transformed

To some high thin ideal, separate
From what he was, by some invisible
bar,

And yet the same in difference. As I
moved

My arms to clasp her to me, lo ! she
moved

Her eager arms to mine, smiled to my
smile,

Looked love to love, and answered
longing eyes

With longing. When my full heart
burst in words,

'Dearest, I love thee,' lo ! the lovely
lips,

'Dearest, I love thee,' sighed, and
through the air

The love-lorn echo rang. But when I
longed

To answer kiss with kiss, and stooped
my lips

To her sweet lips in that long thrill
which strains

Soul unto soul, the cold lymph came
between

And chilled our love, and kept us
separate souls

Which fain would mingle, and the self-
same heaven

Rose, a blue vault above us, and no
shade

Of earthly thing obscured us, as we
lay

Two reflex souls, one and yet different,
Two sundered souls longing to be
at one.

There, all day long, until the light was
gone

And took my love away, I lay and
loved

The image, and when night was come,
'Farewell,'

I whispered, and she whispered back,
'Farewell,'

With oh, such yearning ! Many a day
we spent

By that clear pool together all day long,
And many a clouded hour on the wet
grass

I lay beneath the rain, and saw her not,
And sickened for her ; and sometimes
the pool

Was thick with flood, and hid her ; and
sometimes

Some cold wind ruffled those clear
wells, and left

But glimpses of her, and I rose at eve
Unsatisfied, a cold chill in my limbs

And fever at my heart : until, too soon !
The summer faded, and the skies were
hid,

And my love came not, but a quench-
less thirst

Wasted my life. And all the winter
long

The bright sun shone not, or the thick
ribbed ice

Obscured her, and I pined for her, and
knew

My life ebb from me, till I grew too
weak

To seek her, fearing I should see no
more

My dear. And so the long dead winter
waned

And the slow spring came back.

And one blithe day,
When life was in the woods, and the
birds sang,

And soft airs fanned the hills, I knew
again

Some gleam of hope within me, and
again

With feeble limbs crawled forth, and
felt the spring

Blossom within me; and the flower-
starred glades,

The bursting trees, the building nests,
the songs,

The hurry of life revived me; and I
crept,

Ghost like, amid the joy, until I flung
My panting frame, and weary nerveless
limbs,

Down by the cold still pool.

And lo! I saw
My love once more, not beauteous as
of old,

But oh, how changed! the fair young
cheek grown pale,

The great eyes, larger than of yore,
gaze forth

With a sad yearning look; and a great
pain

And pity took me which were more
than love,

And with a loud and wailing voice I
cried,

'Dearest, I come again. I pine for
thee,'

And swift she answered back, 'I pine
for thee;'

'Come to me, oh, my own,' I cried,
and she—

Come to me, oh, my own. Then
with a cry

Of love I joined myself to her, and
plunged

Beneath the icy surface with a kiss,
And fainted, and am here.

And now, indeed,
I know not if it was myself I sought,
As some tell, or another. For I hold
That what we seek is but our other
self,

Other and higher, neither wholly like
Nor wholly different, the half-life the
gods

Retained when half was given—one
the man

And one the woman; and I longed to
round

The imperfect essence by its comple-
ment,

For only thus the perfect life stands forth
Whole, self-sufficing. Worse it is to
live

Ill-mated than imperfect, and to move
From a false centre, not a perfect
sphere,

But with a crooked bias sent oblique
Athwart life's furrows. 'Twas myself,
indeed,

Thus only that I sought, that lovers use
To see in that they love, not that
which is,

But that their fancy feigns, and view
themselves

Reflected in their love, yet glorified,
And finer and more pure.

Wherefore it is:
All love which finds its own ideal mate
Is happy—happy that which gives itself
Unto itself, and keeps, through long
calm years,

The tranquil image in its eyes, and
knows

Fulfilment and is blest, and day by day
 Wears love like a white flower, nor holds it less
 Though sharp winds bite, or hot suns fade, or age
 Sully its perfect whiteness, but inhales
 Its fragrance, and is glad. But happier still
 He who long seeks a high goal un-
 attained,
 And wearies for it all his days, nor knows
 Possession sate his thirst, but still pursues
 The fleeting loveliness—now seen, now lost,
 But evermore grown fairer, till at last
 He stretches forth his arms and takes the fair
 In one long rapture, and its name is Death.”

Thus he ; and seeing me stand grave :
 “ Farewell.
 If ever thou shouldst happen on a wood
 In Thessaly, upon the plain-ward spurs
 Of fair Olympus, take the path which winds
 Through the close vale, and thou shalt see the pool
 Where once I found my life. And if in Spring
 Thou go there, round the margin thou shalt know
 These amber blooms bend meekly, smiling down
 Upon the crystal surface. Pluck them not.
 But kneel a little while, and breathe a prayer
 To the young god of Love, and let them be.

For in those tender flowers is hid the life
 That once was mine. All things are bound in one
 In earth and heaven, nor is there any gulf
 'Twixt things that live,—the flower that was a life,
 The life that is a flower,—but one sure chain
 Binds all, as now I know.
 If there are still
 Fair Oreads on the hills, say to them, sir,
 They must no longer pine for me, but find
 Some worthier lover, who can love again ;
 For I have found my love.”

And to the pool
 He turned, and gazed with dreaming eyes, and showed
 Fair as an angel.

Leaving him enwrapped
 In musings, to a gloomy pass I came
 Between dark rocks, where scarce a gleam of light,
 Not even the niggard light of that dim land,
 Might enter ; and the soil was black and bare,
 Nor even the thin growths which scarcely clothed
 The higher fields might live. Hard by a cave
 Which sloped down steeply to the lowest depths,
 Whence dreadful sounds ascended, seated still,

Her head upon her hands, I saw a
 maid
 With eyes fixed on the ground—not
 Tartarus
 It was, but Hades ; and she knew no
 pain,
 Except her painful thought. Yet there
 it seemed,
 As here, the unequal measure which
 awaits
 The adjustment, and meanwhile, in-
 spires the strife
 Which rears life's palace walls ; and
 fills the sail
 Which bears our bark across unfathomed
 seas,
 To its last harbour ; this prevailed
 there too,
 And 'twas a luckless shade which sat
 and wept
 Amid the gloom, though blameless.
 Suddenly,
 She raised her head, and lo ! the long
 curls, writhed,
 Tangled, and snake-like—as the drip-
 ping hair
 Of a dead girl who freed from life and
 shame,
 From out the cruel wintry flow, is
 laid
 Stark on the snow with dreadful staring
 eyes
 Like hers. For when she raised her
 eyes to mine,
 They chilled my blood, so great a woe
 they bore ;
 And as she gazed, wide-eyed, I knew
 my pulse
 Beat slow, and my limbs stiffen. Then
 they wore,
 At length, a softer look, and life revived
 Within my breast as thus she softly
 spoke :

“Nay, friend, I would not harm
 thee. I have known
 Great sorrow, and sometimes it racks
 me still,
 And turns me into stone, and makes
 my eyes
 As dreadful as of yore ; and yet it
 comes
 But seldom, as thou sawest, now, for
 Time
 And Death have healing hands. Only
 I love
 To sit within the darkness here, nor
 face
 The throng of happier ghosts ; if any
 ghost
 Of happiness come here. For on the
 earth
 They wronged me bitterly, and turned
 to stone
 My heart, till scarce I knew if e'er I was
 The happy girl of yore.

That youth who dreams
 Up yonder by the margin of the lake,
 Knew but a cold ideal love, but me
 Love in unearthly guise, but bodily
 form,
 Seized and betrayed.

I was a priestess once,
 Of stern Athené, doing day by day
 Due worship ; raising, every dawn that
 came,
 My cold pure hymns to take her virgin
 ear ;
 Nor sporting with the joyous company
 Of youths and maids, who at the neigh-
 bouring shrine
 Of Aphrodité served. Nor dance nor
 song
 Allured me, nor the pleasant days of
 youth
 And twilights 'mid the vines. They
 held me cold

Who were my friends in childhood.

For my soul

Was virginal, and at the virgin shrine
I knelt, athirst for knowledge. Day by
day

The long cold ritual sped, the liturgies
Were done, the barren hymns of praise
went up

Before the goddess, and the ecstasy
Of faith possessed me wholly, till almost
I knew not I was woman. Yet I knew
That I was fair to see, and fit to share
Some natural honest love, and bear the
load

Of children like the rest ; only my soul
Was lost in higher yearnings.

Like a god,

He burst upon those pallid lifeless days,
Bringing fresh airs and salt, as from
the sea,

And wrecked my life. How should a
virgin know

Deceit, who never at the joyous shrine
Of Cypris knelt, but ever lived apart,
And so grew guilty? For if I had
spent

My days among the throng, either my
fault

Were blameless, or undone. For
innocence

The tempter spreads his net. For
innocence

The gods keep all their terrors. Inno-
cence

It is that bears the burden, which for
guilt

Is lightened, and the spoiler goes his
way,

Uncaring, joyous, leaving her alone,
The victim and unfriended.

Was it just

In her, my mistress, who had had my
youth,

To wreak such vengeance on me? I
had erred,

It may be ; but on him, whose was the
guilt,

No heaven-sent vengeance lighted, but
he sped

Away to other hearts across the deep,
Careless and free ; but me, the cold
stern eyes

Of the pure goddess withered ; and the
scorn

Of maids, despised before, and the
great blank

Of love, this wrung my heart, whose
love was gone,

And froze my blood ; set on my brow
despair,

And turned my gaze to stone, and filled
my eyes

With horror, and stiffened the soft
curls which once

Lay smooth and fair into such snake-
like rings

As made my aspect fearful. All who
saw,

Shrank from me and grew cold, and
felt the warm,

Full tide of life freeze in them, seeing
in me

Love's work, who sat wrapt up and
lost in shame,

As in a cloak, consuming my own heart,
And was in hell already. As they gazed

Upon me, my despair looked forth so
cold

From out my eyes, that if some spoiler
came

Fresh from his wickedness, and looked
on them,

Their glare would strike him dead ; and
those fair curls

Which once the accursèd toyed with,
grew to be

The poisonous things thou seest ; and
 so, with hate
 Of man's injustice and the gods', who
 knew
 Me blameless, and yet punished me ;
 and sick
 Of life and love, and loathing earth
 and sky,
 And feeding on my sorrow, Hate at last
 Left me a Fury.

Ah, the load of life

Which lives for hatred ! We are made
 to love—
 We women, and the injury which turns
 The honey of our lives to gall, trans-
 forms
 The angel to the fiend. For it is
 sweet
 To know the dreadful sense of strength,
 and smite
 And leave the tyrant dead with a
 glance ; ay ! sweet,
 In that fierce lust of power, to slay the
 life
 Which harmed not, when the sup-
 pliants' cry ascends
 To ears which hate has deafened. So
 I lived
 Long time in misery ; to my sleepless
 eyes
 No healing slumbers coming ; but at
 length,
 Zeus and the goddess pitying, I knew
 Soft rest once more veiling my dreadful
 gaze
 In peaceful slumbers. Then a blessed
 dream
 I dreamt. For, lo ! a god-like knight
 in mail
 Of gold, who sheared with his keen
 flashing blade ;
 With scarce a pang of pain, the visage
 cold

Which too great sorrow left me ; at one
 stroke
 Clean from the trunk, and then o'er
 land and sea,
 Invisible, sped with winged heels, to
 where,
 Upon a sea-worn cape, a fair young
 maid,
 More blameless even than I was,
 chained and bound,
 Waited a monster from the deep and
 stood
 In innocent nakedness. Then, as he
 rose,
 Loathsome, from out the depths, a
 monstrous growth,
 A creature wholly serpent, partly man,
 The wrongs that I had known, stronger
 than death,
 Rose up with such black hate in me
 again,
 And wreathed such hissing poison
 through my hair,
 And shot such deadly glances from my
 eyes,
 That nought that saw might live. And
 the vile worm
 Was slain, and she delivered. Then I
 dreamt
 My mistress, whom I thought so stern
 to me,
 Athené, set those dreadful staring eyes,
 And that despairing visage, on her shield
 Of chastity, and bears it evermore
 To fright the waverer from the wrong
 he would,
 And strike the unrepenting spoiler,
 dead."

Then for a little paused she, while I
 saw
 Again her eyes grow dreadful, till
 once more,

And with a softer glance :

“ From that blest dream

I woke not on the earth, but only here.

And now my pain is lightened since I know

My dream, which was a dream within the dream

Which is our life, fulfilled. And I have saved

Another through my suffering, and through her

A people. Oh, strange chain of sacrifice,

That binds an innocent life, and from its blood

And sorrow works out joy! Oh, mystery

Of pain and evil! wrong grown salutary,

And mighty to redeem! If thou shouldst see

A woman on the earth, who pays to-day

Like penalty of sin, and the new gods (For after Saturn, Zeus ruled; after him

It may be there are others) love to take The tender heart of girlhood, and to immure

Within a cold and cloistered cell the life

Which nature meant to bless, and if Love come

Hold her accursed; or to some poor maid,

Forlorn and trusting, still the tempter comes

And works his wrong, and leaves her in despair

And shame and all abhorrence, while he goes

His way unpunished,—if thou know her eyes

Freeze thee like mine—oh! bid her lose her pain

In succouring others—say to her that Time

And Death have healing hands, and here there comes

To the forgiven transgressor only pain Enough to chasten joy!”

And a soft tear

Trembled within her eyes, and her sweet gaze

Was as the Magdalen’s, the horror gone

And a great radiance come.

Then as I passed

To upper air, I saw two figures rise Together, one a woman with a grave Fair face not all unhappy, and the robes

And presence of a queen; and with her walked

The comeliest youth that ever maiden’s dream

Conceived. And as they came, the throng of ghosts,

For these who were not wholly ghosts, arose,

And did them homage. Not the bond of love

Bound them, but such calm kinship as is bred

Of long and difficult pilgrimages borne Through common perils by two souls which share

A common weary exile. Nor as ghosts These showed, but rather like two lives which hung

Suspended in a trance. A halo of life

Played round them, and they brought
 a sweet brisk air
 Tasting of earth and heaven, like
 sojourners
 Who stayed but for awhile, and knew
 a swift
 Release await them. First the youth
 it was
 Who spake thus as they passed :

“Dread Queen, once more
 I feel life stir within me, and my blood
 Run faster, while a new strange cycle
 turns
 And grows completed. Soon on the
 dear earth,
 Under the lively light of fuller day,
 I shall revive me of my wound ; and
 thou,
 Passing with me yon cold and lifeless
 stream,
 And the grim monster who will fawn
 on thee,
 Shalt issue in royal pomp, and wreathed
 with flowers,
 Upon the cheerful earth, leaving behind
 A deeper winter for the ghosts who
 dwell
 Within these sunless haunts ; and I
 shall lie
 Once more within loved arms, and thou
 shalt see
 Thy early home, and kiss thy mother’s
 cheek,
 And be a girl again. But not for long ;
 For ere the bounteous Autumn spreads
 her hues
 Of gold and purple, a cold voice will
 call
 And bring us to these wintry lands once
 more,
 As erst so often. Blest are we, indeed,
 Above the rest, and yet I would I knew
 The careless joys of old.

For in hot youth,
 Oh, it was sweet to greet the balmy
 night
 That was love’s nurse, and feel the
 weary eyes
 Closed by soft kisses,—sweet at early
 dawn
 To wake refreshed and, scarce from
 loving arms
 ‘Scaping, to ride afield, with winding
 horn,
 By dewy heath and brake, and taste
 the fresh
 Young breath of early morning ; and
 ’twas sweet
 To chase the bounding quarry all day
 long
 With my good hounds and trusty steed,
 and gay
 Young comrades of my youth, and with
 the eve
 To turn home laden with the spoil, and
 take
 The banquet which awaited, and sweet
 wine
 Poured out, and kisses pressed on
 loving lips ;
 Circled by snowy arms. Oh, it was
 sweet
 To be alive and young !

For sure it is
 The gods gave not quick pulses and
 hot blood
 And strength and beauty for no end,
 but would
 That we should use them wisely ; and
 the fair,
 Sweet mistress of my service was,
 indeed,
 Worthy of all observance. Oh, her
 eyes
 When I lay bleeding ! All day long
 we rode,

I and my youthful peers, with horse
and hound,
And knew the joy of swift pursuit and
toil
And peril. At the last, a fierce boar
turned
At bay, and with his gleaming tusks
o'erthrew
My steed, and as I fell upon the
flowers,
Pierced me as with a sword. Then,
as I lay,
I knew the strange slow chill which,
stealing, tells
The young that it is death. Yet knew
I not
Or pain or fear, only great pity, indeed,
That she should lose her love, who was
so fond
And gracious. But when, lifting my
dim gaze,
I saw her bend o'er me,—the lovely
eyes
Suffused with tears, and her sweet
smile replaced
By sweeter sorrow,—for a while I
stayed
Life's ebbing tide, and raised my cold,
white lips,
With a faint smile, to hers. Then,
with a kiss—
One long last kiss, we mingled, and I
knew
No more.

But even in death, so strong is Love,
I could not wholly die ; and year by
year,
When the flowered Spring returns, and
the earth lives,
Love opens these dread gates, and calls
me forth
Across the gulf. Not here, indeed, she
comes,

Being a goddess and in heaven, but
smooths
My path to the old earth, where still I
know
Once more the dear lost days, and once
again
Blossom on that soft breast, and am
again
A youth, and rapt in love ; and yet
not all
As careless as of yore ; but seem to
know
The early spring of passion, tamed by
time
And suffering, to a calmer, fuller flow,
Less fitful, but more strong."

Then the sad Queen :

" Fair youth, thy lot I know, for I am
old
As the old earth and yet as young
as is
The budding spring, and I was here a
Queen,
When Love was not or Time, and to
my arms
Thou cam'st as a little child, to dwell
Within the halls of Death, for without
Death
There were nor Birth nor Love, nor
would Life yearn
To lose itself within another life,
And dying, to be born. I, too, have
died
For love in part, and live again through
love ;
For in the far-off years, when Time
was young,
And Love unborn on earth, and Zeus
in heaven
Ruled, a young sovereign ; I, a maiden,
dwelt
With loved Demeter on the sunny
plains

Of our own Sicily. There, day by day,
I sported with my playmate goddesses,
In virgin freedom. Budding age made
gay

Our lightsome feet, and on the flowery
slopes

We wandered daily, gathering flowers
to weave

In careless garlands for our locks, and
passed

The days in innocent gladness. Thought
of Love

There came not to us, for as yet the
earth

Was virginal, nor yet had Eros come
With his delicious pain.

And one fair morn—
Not all the ages blot it—on the side

Of Ætna we were straying. There was
then

Summer nor winter, springtide nor the
time

Of harvest, but the soft unfailing sun
Shone always, and the sowing time was
one

With reaping ; fruit and flower together
glowed

Upon the trees ; and blade and ripened
ear

Together clothed the plains. There,
as I strayed,

Sudden a black cloud down the rugged
side

Of Ætna, mixed with fire and dreadful
sound

Of thunder, rolled around me, and I
heard

The maids who were my fellows turn
and flee

With shrieks and cries for me.

But I, I knew
No terror while the god o'ershadowed
me,

Hiding my life in his, nor when I wept,
My flowers all withered, and my blood
ran slow

Within a wintry land. Some voice
there was

Which said, 'Fear not. Thou shalt
return and see

Thy mother again, only a little while
Fate wills that thou shouldst tarry, and
become

Queen of another world. Thou seest
that all

Thy flowers are faded. They shall live
again

On earth, as thou shalt, as thou livest
now

The Life of Death—for what is Death
but Life

Suspended as in sleep? The primal
rule

Where life was constant, and the sun
o'erhead,

Blazed forth unchanging, changes and
is hidden

Awhile. This region which thou seest,
where all

The trees are lifeless, and the flowers
are dead,

Is but the self-same earth on which
erewhile

Thou sportedst fancy free.'

So, without fear
I wandered on this bare land, seeing far
Upon the sky the peaks of my own hills
And crests of my own woods. Till,
when I grew

Hungered, ere yet another form I saw ;
Along the silent alleys journeying,
And leafless groves ; a fair and mystic
tree

Rose like a heart in shape, and 'mid its
leaves

One golden mystic fruit with a fair seed

Hid in it. This, with childish hand, I
took
And ate, and straight I knew the tree
was Life,
And the fruit Death, and the hid seed
was Love.

Ah, sweet strange fruit ! the which
if any taste
They may no longer keep their lives of
old
Or their own selves unchanged, but
some weird change
And subtle alchemy comes which can
transmute
The blood, and mould the spirits of
gods and men
In some new magical form. Not as
before,
Our life comes to us, though the passion
cools,
Nay, never as before. My mother
came
Too late to seek me. She had power
to raise
A life from out Death's grasp, but from
the arms
Of Love she might not take me, nor
undo
Love's past for all her strength. She
came and sought
With fires her daughter over land and
sea,
Beyond the paths of all the setting stars,
In vain, and over all the earth in vain,
Seeking whom love disguised. Then
on all lands
She cast the spell of barrenness; the
wheat
Was blighted in the ear, the purple
grapes
Blushed no more on the vines, and all
the gods

Were sorrowful, seeing the load of ill
My rape had laid on men. Last, Zeus
himself,
Pitying the evil that was done, sent forth
His messenger beyond the western rim
To fetch me back to earth.

But not the same
He found me who had eaten of Love's
seed,
But changed into another ; nor could
his power
Prevail to keep me wholly on the earth,
Or make me maid again. The wintry
life
Is homelier often than the summer blaze
Of happiness unclouded ; so, when
Spring
Comes on the world, I, coming, cross
with thee,
Year after year, the cruel icy stream ;
And leave this anxious sceptre and the
shades
Of those in hell, or those for whom,
though blest,
No Spring comes, till the last great
Spring which brings
New heavens and new earth ; and lay
my head
Upon my mother's bosom, and grow
young,
And am a girl again.

A soft air breathes
Across the stream and fills these barren
fields
With the sweet odours of the earth. I
know
Again the perfume of the violets
Which bloom on Ætna's side. Soon
we shall pass
Together to our home, while round our
feet
The crocus flames like gold, the wind-
flowers white

Wave their soft petals on the breeze,
 and all
 The choir of flowers lift up their silent
 song
 To the unclouded heavens. Thou, fair
 boy,
 Shalt lie within thy love's white arms
 again,
 And I within my mother's. Sweet is Love
 In ceasing and renewal ; nay, in these
 It lives and has its being. Thou couldst
 not keep
 Thy youth as now, if always on the
 breast
 Of love too late a lingerer thou hadst
 known
 Possession sate thee. Nor might I have
 kept
 My mother's heart, if I had lived to ripe
 And wither on the stalk. Time calls
 and Change
 Commands both men and gods, and
 speeds us on
 We know not whither ; but the old
 earth smiles
 Spring after Spring, and the seed bursts
 again
 Out of its prison mould, and the dead
 lives
 Renew themselves, and rise aloft and
 soar
 And are transformed, clothing them-
 selves with change
 Till the last change be done."

As thus she spake,
 I saw a gleam of light flash from the eyes
 Of all the listening shades, and a great
 joy
 Thrill through the realms of Death.

And then again
 A youthful shade I saw, a comely boy,
 With lip and cheek just touched with
 manly down,
 And strong limbs wearing Spring ; in
 mien and garb
 A youthful chieftain, with a perfect face
 Of fresh young beauty, clustered curls
 divine,
 And chiselled features like a sculptured
 god,
 But warm and breathing life ; only the
 eyes,
 The full dark eyes, were full of dream-
 ing thought,
 And seemed to gaze beyond the world
 of sight,
 On a hid world of beauty. Him I
 stayed,
 Accosting with soft words of courtesy ;
 And, on a bank of scentless flowers
 reclined,
 He answered thus :
 " Not for the garish sun
 I long, nor for the splendours of high
 noon
 In this dim land I languish ; for of
 yore
 Full often, when the swift chase swept
 along
 Through the brisk morn, or when my
 comrades called
 To wrestling, or the foot-race, or to
 cleave
 The sunny stream, I loved to walk
 apart,
 Self-centred, sole ; and when the
 laughing girls
 To some fair stripling's oaten melody
 Made ready for the dance, I heeded
 not ;
 Nor when to the loud trumpet's blast
 and blare

My peers rode forth to battle. For,
 one eve,
 In Latmos, after a long day in June,
 I stayed to rest me on a sylvan hill,
 Where often youth and maid were wont
 to meet
 Toward moonrise; and deep slumber
 fell on me
 Musing on Love, just as the ruddy orb
 Rose on the lucid night, set in a frame
 Of blooming myrtle and sharp tremulous
 plane;
 Deep slumber fell, and loosed my limbs
 in rest.

Then, as the full orb poised upon the
 peak,
 There came a lovely vision of a maid,
 Who seemed to step as from a silvery
 skiff
 Out of the low-hung moon. No mortal
 form,
 Such as oft-times of yore I knew and
 clasped
 At twilight 'mid the vines at the mad
 feast
 Of Dionysus, or the fair maids cold
 Who streamed in white processions to
 the shrine
 Of the chaste Virgin Goddess; but a
 shape
 Richer and yet more pure. No thinnest
 veil
 Obscured her; but each exquisite limb
 revealed,
 She seemed an ivory statue subtly
 wrought
 By a great sculptor on the architrave
 Of some high temple-front—only in her
 The form was soft and loving, breath-
 ing life,
 And tender. As I seemed to gaze on
 her,

Nearer she drew and gazed; and as I
 lay
 Supine, beneath her spell, the radiance
 stooped
 And kissed me on the lips, a chaste,
 sweet kiss,
 Which drew my spirit with it. So I
 slept
 Each night upon the hill, until the
 Dawn
 Came in his golden chariot from the East,
 And chased my Love away. But ever
 thus
 Dissolved in love as in a heaven-sent
 dream,
 Whenever the bright circle of the moon
 Climbed from the hills, whether in leafy
 June
 Or harvest-tide, or when they leapt and
 pressed
 Red-thighed the spouting must, I
 walked apart
 From all, and took no thought for
 mortal maid,
 Nor nimble joys of youth; but night
 by night
 I stole, when all were sleeping, to the
 hill,
 And slumbered and was blest; until I
 grew
 Possesed by love so deep, I seemed to
 live
 In slumbers only, while the waking day
 Showed faint as any vision.

So I grew
 Paler and feebler with the months, and
 climbed
 The steep with laboured steps and
 difficult breath,
 But still I climbed. Ay, though the
 wintry frost
 Chained fast the streams and whitened
 all the fields,

I sought my mistress through the leafless
 groves,
 And slumbered and was happy, till the
 dawn
 Returning found me stretched out, cold
 and stark,
 With life's fire nigh burnt out. Till
 one clear night,
 When the birds shivered in the pines,
 and all
 The inner heavens stood open, lo ! she
 came,
 Brighter and kinder still, and kissed
 my eyes
 And half-closed lips, and drew my soul
 through them,
 And in one precious ecstasy dissolved
 My life. And thenceforth, ever on the
 hill
 I lie unseen of man ; a cold, white form,
 Still young, through all the ages ; but
 my soul,
 Wearing this thin presentment of old
 days,
 Walks this dim land, where never
 moonrise comes,
 Nor day-break, but a twilight waiting-
 time,
 No more ; and, ah ! how weary ! Yet
 I judge
 My lot a higher far than his who spends
 His youth on swift hot pleasure, quickly
 past ;
 Or theirs, my equals', who through long
 calm years
 Grew sleek in dull content of wedded
 lives
 And fair-grown offspring. Many a day
 for them,
 While I was wandering here, and my
 bones bleached
 Upon the rocks, the sweet autumnal
 sun

Beamed, and the grapes grew purple.
 Many a day
 They heaped up gold, they knelt at
 festivals,
 They waxed in high report and fame of
 men,
 They gave their girls in marriage ; while
 for me
 Upon the untrodden peaks, the cold,
 grey morn,
 The snows, the rains, the winds, the
 untempered blaze,
 Beat year by year, until I turned to
 stone,
 And the great eagles shrieked at me,
 and wheeled
 Affrighted. Yet I judge it better
 indeed
 To seek in life, as now I know I sought,
 Some fair impossible Love, which slays
 our life,
 Some fair ideal raised too high for man ;
 And failing, to grow mad, and cease to
 be,
 Than to decline, as they do who have
 found
 Broad-paunched content and weal and
 happiness :
 And so an end. For one day, as I
 know,
 The high aim unfulfilled fulfils itself ;
 The deep, unsatisfied thirst is satisfied ;
 And through this twilight, broken
 suddenly,
 The inmost heaven, the lucent stars of
 God,
 The Moon of Love, the Sun of Life ;
 and I,
 I who pine here—I on the Latmian hill
 Shall soar aloft and find them."
 With the word,
 There beamed a shaft of dawn athwart
 the skies,

And straight the sentinel thrush within
the yew
Sang out reveillé to the hosts of day,
Soldierly; and the pomp and rush of life
Began once more, and left me there
alone
Amid the awaking world.

Nay, not alone.

One fair shade lingered in the fuller day,
The last to come, when now my dream
had grown
Half mixed with waking thoughts, as
grows a dream
In summer mornings when the broader
light
Dazzles the sleeper's eyes; and is most
fair
Of all and best remembered, and
becomes
Part of our waking life, when older
dreams
Grow fainter, and are fled. So this
remained
The fairest of the visions that I knew,
Most precious and most dear.

The increasing light
Shone through her, finer than the
thinnest shade,
And yet most full of beauty; golden
wings,
From her fair shoulders springing,
seemed to raise
Her stainless feet from the gross earth
and lift
Their wearer into air; and in her eyes
Was such fair glance as comes from
virgin love,
Long chastened and triumphant.
Every soil

Of life had vanished from her, and
she showed
As one who walks a saint already on
earth,
Virgin or mother. Immortality
Breathed from those radiant eyes which
yet had passed
Between the gates of death. I seemed
to hear

The Soul of mortals speaking:

"I was born
Of a great race and mighty, and was
grown
Fair, as they said, and good, and kept
a life
Pure from all stain of passion. Love
I knew not,
Who was absorbed in duty; and the
Queen
Of gods and men, seeing my life more
calm
Than human, hating my impassive heart,
Sent down her perfect son in wrath to
earth,
And bade him break me.

But when Eros came,
It did repent him of the task, for Love
Is kin to Duty.

And within my life
I knew miraculous change, and a soft
flame
Wherefrom the snows of Duty flushed
to rose,
And the chill icy depths of mind were
stirred
By a warm tide of passion. Long I
lived
Not knowing what had been, nor re-
cognized
A Presence walking with me through
my life,
As if by night, his face and form con-
cealed:

A gracious voice alone, which none
but I

Might hear, sustained me, and its name
was Love.

Not as the earthly loves which throb
and flush

Round earthly shrines was mine, but
a pure spirit,

Lovelier than all embodied love, more
pure

And wonderful ; but never on his eyes
I looked, which still were hidden, and
I knew not

The fashion of his nature ; for by night,
When visual eyes are blind, but the
soul sees,

Came he, and bade me think not to
make search

Or whence he came or wherefore.
Nor knew I

His name. And always ere the coming
day,

As if he were the Sun-god, lingering
With some too well-loved maiden, he
would rise

And vanish until eve. But all my being
Thrilled with my fair unearthly visitant
To higher duty and more glorious meed
Of action than of old, for it was Love
That came to me, who might not know
his name.

Thus, ever rapt by dreams divine,
I knew

The scorn that comes from weaker
souls, which miss,

Being too low of nature, the great joy
Revealed to others higher ; nay, my
sisters,

Who being of one blood with me, made
choice

To tread the flowery ways of daily life,

Grew jealous of me, bidding me take
heed

Lest haply 'twas some monstrous fiend
I loved,

Such as in fable oft-times sought and won
The innocent hearts of maids. Long
time I held

My love too dear for doubt, who was
so sweet

And lovable. But at the last the sneers,
The mystery which hid him, the swift
flight

Before the coming dawn, the shape
concealed,

The curious girlish heart, these worked
on me

With an unsatisfied thirst. Not his
own words :

' Dear, I am with thee only while I keep
My visage hidden ; and if thou once
shouldst see

My face, I must forsake thee : the
high gods

Link Love with Faith, and he with-
draws himself

From the full gaze of Knowledge'—
not even these

Could cure me of my longing, or the fear
Those mocking voices worked : who
fain would learn

The worst that might befall.

And one sad night,
Just ere the day leapt from the hills
and brought

The hour when he should go : with
tremulous hands,

Lighting my midnight lamp in fear, I
stood

Long time uncertain, and at length
turned round

And gazed upon my love. He lay asleep,
And oh, how fair he was ! The flicker-
ing light

Fell on the fairest of the gods, stretched
out
In happy slumber. Looking on his
locks
Of gold, and faultless face and smile,
and limbs
Made perfect, a great joy and trembling
took me
Who was most blest of women, and in
awe
And fear I stooped to kiss him. One
warm drop—
From the full lamp within my trembling
hand,
Or a glad tear from my too happy eyes,
Fell on his shoulder.

Then the god unclosed
His lovely eyes, and with great pity
spake :
'Farewell! There is no Love except
with Faith,
And thine is dead! Farewell! I
come no more.'
And straightway from the hills the full
red sun
Leapt up, and as I clasped my love
again,
The lovely vision faded from his place,
And came no more.

Then I, with breaking heart,
Knowing my life laid waste by my own
hand,
Went forth and would have sought to
hide my life
Within the stream of Death; but Death
came not
To aid me who not yet was meet for
Death.

Then finding that Love came not
back to me,
I thought that in the temples of the gods
Haply he dwelt, and so from fane to fane

I wandered over earth, and knelt in each,
Enquiring for my Love; and I would ask
The priests and worshippers, 'Is this
Love's shrine?

Sirs, have you seen the god?' But
never at all

I found him. For some answered,
'This is called

The Shrine of Knowledge;' and
another, 'This,

The Shrine of Beauty;' and another,
'Strength;'

And yet another, 'Youth.' And I
would kneel

And say a prayer to my Love, and rise
And seek another. Long, o'er land
and sea,

I wandered, till I was not young or fair,
Grown wretched, seeking my lost Love;
and last,

Came to the smiling, hateful shrine
where ruled

The queen of earthly love and all
delight,

Cypris, but knelt not there, but asked
of one

Who seemed her priest, if Eros dwelt
with her.

Then to the subtle-smiling goddess'
self

They led me. She with hatred in her
eyes:

'What! thou to seek for Love, who
art grown thin

And pale with watching! He is not
for thee.

What Love is left for such? Thou
didst despise

Love, and didst dwell apart. Love
sits within

The young maid's eyes, making them
beautiful.

Love is for youth, and joy, and happiness ;

And not for withered lives. Ho !
bind her fast.

Take her and set her to the vilest tasks,
And bend her pride by solitude and tears,

Who will not kneel to me, but dares to seek

A disembodied love. My son has gone
And left thee for thy fault, and thou shalt know

The misery of my thralls.

Then in her house
They bound me to hard tasks and vile,
and kept

My life from honour, chained among
her slaves

And lowest ministers, taking despite
And injury for food, and set to bind
Their wounds whom she had tortured,
and to feed

The pitiful lives which in her prisons
pent

Languished in hopeless pain. There is
no sight

Of suffering but I saw it, and was set
To succour it ; and all my woman's
heart

Was torn with the ineffable miseries
Which love and life have worked ; and
dwelt long time

In groanings and in tears.

And then, oh joy !
Oh miracle ! once more again at length
I felt Love's arms around me, and the
kiss

Of Love upon my lips, and in the chill
Of deepest prison cells, 'mid vilest tasks,
The glow of his sweet breath, and the
warm touch

Of his invisible hand, and his sweet
voice,

Ay, sweeter than of old, and tenderer,

Speak to me, pierce me, hold me, fold
me round

With arms Divine, till all the sordid
earth

Was hued like heaven, and Life's dull
prison-house

Turned to a golden palace, and those
low tasks

Grew to be higher works and nobler
gains

Than any gains of knowledge, and at
last

He whispered softly, ' Dear, unclosethine eyes,

Thou mayst look on me now. I go no
more,

But am thine own for ever.'

Then with wings
Of gold we soared, I looking in his
eyes,

Over yon dark broad river, and this
dim land,

Scarce for an instant staying till we
reached

The inmost courts of heaven.

But sometimes still
I come here for a little, and speak a
word

Of peace to those who wait. The
slow wheel turns,

The cycles round themselves and grow
complete,

The world's year whitens to the
harvest-tide,

And one word only am I sent to say
To those dear souls, who wait here, or
who now

Breathe earthly air — one universal
word

To all things living, and the word is
' Love.' "

Then soared she visibly before my
gaze,
And the heavens took her, and I knew
my eyes
Had seen the Soul of man, the death-
less Soul,
Defeated, struggling, purified, and blest.

Then all the choir of happy waiting
shades,
Heroes and queens, fair maidens and
brave youths,
Swept by me, rhythmic, slow, as if they
trod

Some unheard measure, passing where
I stood
In fair procession, each with a faint
smile
Upon the lip, signing "Farewell, oh
shade!
It shall be well with thee, as 'tis with us,
If only thou art true. The world of
Life,
The world of Death, are but opposing
sides
Of one great orb, and the Light shines
on both.
Oh, happy, happy shade! Farewell!
Farewell!"
And so they passed away.

BOOK III. OLYMPUS.

BUT I, my gaze
Following the soaring soul which now
was lost
In the awakening skies, floated with
her,
As in a trance, beyond the golden gates
Which separate Earth from Heaven;
and to my thought,
Gladdened by that broad effluence of
light,
This old earth seemed transfigured, and
the fields,
So dim and bare, grew green and
clothed themselves
With lustrous hues. A fine ethereal air
Played round me as I mused, and filled
the soul
With an ineffable content. What help
In words to tell of things unreached by
words?
Or how to engrave upon the treacherous
thought

The fair and fugitive fancies of a
dream,
Which vanish ere we fix them?
But methinks
He knows the scene, who knows the
one fair day,
One only and no more, which year by
year
In springtime comes, when lingering
winter flies,
And lo! the bare boughs pranked with
white and pink,
And golden clusters, and the green
glades starred
With delicate primrose and deep
odorous beds
Of violets, and on the tufted meads
With kingcups lit, and cowslip bells,
and blue
Sweet hyacinths, and frail anemones,
The broad West wind breathes softly,
and the air

Is tremulous with the lark, and thro'
 the woods
 The soft full-throated thrushes all day
 long
 Flood the green dells with joy, and
 thro' the dry
 Brown fields the sower strides, sowing
 his seed,
 And all is life and song. Or he who
 first,
 Whether in fair free boyhood, when the
 world
 Is his to choose, or when his fuller life
 Beats to another life, or afterwards,
 Keeping his youth within his children's
 eyes,
 Looks on the snow-clad everlasting
 hills,
 And marks the sunset smite them, and
 is glad
 Of the beautiful fair world.
A springtide land
 It seemed, where East winds came not.
 Sweetest song
 Was everywhere, by glade or sunny
 plain ;
 And thro' the golden valleys winding
 streams
 Rippled in glancing silver, and above,
 The blue hills rose, and over all a peak,
 White, awful, with a constant fleece of
 cloud
 Veiling its summit, towered. Unfailing
 Day
 Lighted it, for no turn of dawn and eve
 Came there, nor changing seasons, but
 a broad
 Fixed joy of Being, undisturbed by
 Time.

There, in a happy glade shut in by
 groves
 Of laurel and sweet myrtle, on a green

And flower-lit lawn, I seemed to see
 the ghosts
 Of the old gods. Upon the gentle slope
 Of a fair hill, a joyous company,
 The Immortals lay. Hard by, a mur-
 murous stream
 Fell through the flowers ; below them,
 space on space,
 Laughed the immeasurable plains ;
 beyond,
 The mystic mountain soared. Height
 after height
 Of bare rock ledges left the climbing
 pines,
 And reared their giddy, shining terraces
 Into the ethereal air. Above, the snows
 Of the white summit cleft the fleece of
 cloud
 Which always clothed it round.
Ah, fair and sweet,
 Yet with a ghostly fairness, fine and
 thin,
 Those godlike Presences. Not dreams
 indeed,
 But something dream-like, were they.
 Blessed Shades
 Heroic and Divine, as when, in days
 When Man was young, and Time, the
 vivid thought
 Translated into Form the unattained
 Impossible Beauty of men's dreams,
 and fixed
 The Loveliness in marble.
As with awe
 Following my spotless guide, I stood
 apart,
 Not daring to draw near ; a shining form
 Rose from the throng, and floated,
 light as air,
 To where I trembled. And I knew
 the face
 And form of Artemis, the fair, the pure,
 The undefiled. A crescent silvery moon

Shone thro' her locks, and by her side
she bore

A quiver of golden darts. At sight of
whom

I felt a sudden chill, like his who once
Looked upon her and died ; yet could
not fear,

Seeing how fair she was. Her sweet
voice rang

Clear as a bird's :

"Mortal, what fate hath brought
Thee hither, uncleansed by death?
How canst thou breathe

Immortal air, being mortal ! Yet fear
not,

Since thou art come. For we too are
of earth

Whom here thou seest : there were not
a heaven

Were there no earth, nor gods, had men
not been,

But each the complement of each and
grown

The other's creature, is and has its being,
A double essence, Human and Divine.
So that the God is hidden in the man,

And something Human bounds and
forms the God ;

Which else had shown too great and
undefined

For mortal sight, and having no human
eye

To see it, were unknown. But we who
bore

Sway of old time, we were but attributes
* Of the great God who is all Things
that be—

The Pillar of the Earth and starry Sky,
The Depth of the great Deep ; the Sun,
the Moon,

The Word which Makes ; the All-
compelling Love—

* See the Orphic Hymns.

For all Things lie within His Infinite
Form."

Even as she spake, a throng of shapes
divine

Floated around me, filling all my soul
With fair unearthly beauty, and the air
With such ambrosial perfume as is born,
When morning breathes upon a tropic
sea,

From boundless wastes of flowers ; and
as I knelt

In rapture, lo ! the same clear voice
again

From out the throng of gods :

"Those whom thou seest
Were even as I, embodiments of Him
Who is the Centre of all Life : myself
The Maiden-Queen of Purity ; and
Strength,

Divine when unabused ; Love too, the
Spring

And Cause of Things ; and Knowledge,
which lays bare

Their secret ; and calm Duty, Queen
of all,

And Motherhood in one ; and Youth,
which bears,

Beauty of Form and Life and Light,
and breathes

The breath of Inspiration ; and the Soul,
The particle of God, sent down to man,
Which doth in turn reveal the world
and God.

Wherefore it is men called on
Artemis,

The refuge of young souls ; for still in
age

They keep some dim reflection uneffaced
Of a Diviner Purity than comes

To the spring days of youth, when all
the world

Smiles, and the rapid blood thro' the
 young veins
 Courses, and all is glad ; yet knowing
 too
 That innocence is young—before the soil
 And smirch of sadder knowledge,
 settling on it,
 Sully its primal whiteness. So they
 knelt
 At my white shrines, the eager boyish
 souls,
 To whom life's road showed like a dewy
 field
 In early summer dawns, when to the
 sound
 Of youth's clear voice, and to the
 cheerful rush
 Of the tumultuous feet and clamorous
 tongues
 Careering onwards, fair and dappled
 fawns,
 Strange birds with jewelled plumes,
 fierce spotted pards,
 Rise in the joyous chase, to be caught
 and slain
 By the young conqueror ; nor yet the
 charm
 Of sensual ease allures. And they knelt
 too,
 The pure sweet maidens fair and fancy-
 free,
 Whose innocent virgin hearts shrank
 from the touch
 Of passion as from wrong—sweet moon-
 lit lives
 Which fade, and pale, and vanish, in
 the glare
 Of Love's hot noontide : these came
 robed in white,
 With holy hymns and soaring liturgies :
 And so men fabled me, a huntress now,
 Borne thro' the flying woodlands, fair
 and free ;

And now the pale cold Moon, Light
 without warmth,
 Zeal without touch of passion, heavenly
 love
 For human, and the altar for the home.

 But oh, how sweet it was to take the
 love
 And awe of my young worshippers ; to
 watch
 The pure young gaze and hear the pure
 young voice
 Mount in the hymn, or see the gay
 troop come
 With the first dawn of day, brushing
 the dew
 From the unpolluted fields, and wake
 to song
 The slumbering birds ; strong in their
 innocence !
 I did not envy any goddess of all
 The Olympian company her votaries !
 Ah, happy days of old which now are
 gone !
 A memory and a dream ! for now on
 earth
 I rule no longer o'er young willing
 hearts
 In voluntary fealty, which would cease
 When Love, with fiery accents calling,
 woke
 The slumbering soul ; as now it should
 for those
 Who kneel before the purer, sadder
 shrine
 Which has replaced my own. But ah !
 too oft,
 Not always, but too often, shut from
 life
 Within pale life-long cloisters and the
 bars
 Of hopeless convent prisons, year by
 year,

Age after age, the white souls fade and
 pine
 Which simulate the joyous service free
 Of those young worshippers. I would
 that I
 Might loose the captives' chain; or
 Herakles,
 Who was a mortal once."

But he who stood
 Colossal at my side :

"I toil no more
 On earth, nor wield again the mighty
 strength
 Which Zeus once gave me for the cure
 of ill.

I have run my race; I have done my
 work; I rest

For ever from the toilsome days I gave
 To the suffering race of men. And yet,
 indeed,

Methinks they suffer still. Tyrannous
 growths

And monstrous vex them still. Pesti-
 lence lurks

And sweeps them down. Treacheries
 come, and wars,

And slay them still. Vaulting ambition
 leaps

And falls in bloodshed still. But I am
 here

At rest, and no man kneels to me, or
 keeps

Reverence for strength mighty yet un-
 abused—

Strength which is Power, God's choicest
 gift, more rare

And precious than all Beauty, or the
 charm

Of Wisdom, since it is the instrument

Thro' which all Nature works. For
 now the earth

Is full of meekness, and a new God
 rules,

Teaching strange precepts of humility
 And mercy and forgiveness. Yet I
 trow

There is no lack of bloodshed and
 deceit

And groanings, and the tyrant works
 his wrong

Even as of old; but now there is no
 arm

Like mine, made strong by Zeus, to
 beat him down,

Him and his wrong together. Yet I
 know

I am not all discrowned. The strong
 brave souls,

The manly tender hearts, whom tale of
 wrong

To woman or child, to all weak things
 and small,

Fires like a blow; kindling the righteous
 flush

Of anger on the brow; knotting the
 cords

Of muscle on the arm; with one desire
 To hew the spoiler down, and make an
 end,

And go their way for others; making
 light

Of toil and pain, and too laborious days,
 And peril; beat unchanged, albeit they
 serve

A Lord of meekness. For the world
 still needs

Its champion as of old, and finds him
 still.

Not always now with mighty sinews
 and thews

Like mine, though still these profit, but
 keen brain.

And voice to move men's souls to love
 the right
 And hate the wrong; even tho' the
 bodily form
 Be weak, of giant strength, strong to
 assail
 The hydra heads of Evil, and to slay
 The monsters that now waste them:
 Ignorance,
 Self-seeking, coward fears, the hate of
 Man,
 Disguised as love of God. These
 labour still
 With toil as hard as mine. For what
 was it
 To strive with bodily ills, and do great
 deeds
 Of daring and of strength, and bear the
 crown,
 To his high task who wages lifelong
 strife
 With an impalpable foe; conquering
 indeed,
 But, ere he hears the pæan or sees the
 pomp
 Laid low in the arms of Death? And
 tho' men cease
 To worship at my shrine, yet not the
 less
 It is the toils I knew, the pains I bore
 For others, which have kept the stead-
 fast heart
 Of manhood undefiled, and nerved the
 arm
 Of sacrifice, and made the martyr strong
 To do and bear, and taught the race of
 men
 How godlike 'tis to suffer thro' life, and
 die
 At last for others' good!"

 The strong god ceased,
 And stood a little, musing; blest in-
 deed,

But bearing, as it seemed, some faintest
 trace
 Of earthly struggle still, not the gay
 ease
 Of the elder heaven-born gods.

 And then there came
 Beauty and Joy in one, bearing the form
 Of woman. How to reach with halting
 words
 That infinite Perfection? All have
 known
 The breathing marbles which the Greek
 has left
 Who saw her near, and strove to fix her
 charms,
 And exquisitely failed; or those fair
 forms
 The Painter offered at a later shrine,
 And failed. Nay, what are words?—
 he knows it well
 Who loves, or who has loved.

 She with a smile
 Playing around her rosy lips; as plays
 The sunbeam on a stream:

 "Shall I complain
 Men kneel to me no longer, taking to
 them
 Some graver, sterner worship; grown
 too wise
 For fleeting joys of Love? Nay, Love
 is Youth,
 And still the world is young. Still
 shall I reign
 Within the hearts of men, while Time
 shall last
 And Life renews itself. All Life that
 is,
 From the weak things of earth or sea
 or air,

Which creep or float for an hour ; to
 godlike man—
 All know me and are mine. I am the
 source
 And mother of all, both gods and men ;
 the spring
 Of Force and Joy, which, penetrating
 all
 Within the hidden depths of the Un-
 known,
 Sets the blind germ of Being, and from
 the bond
 Of incomplete and dual Essences
 Evolves the harmony which is Life.
 The world
 Were dead without my rays, who am
 the Light
 Which vivifies the world. Nay, but for
 me,
 The universal order which attracts
 Sphere unto sphere, and keeps them in
 their paths
 For ever, were no more. All things
 are bound :
 Within my golden chain, whose name
 is Love.

And if there be, indeed, some sterner
 souls
 Or sunk in too much learning, or
 hedged round
 By care and greed, or haply too much
 rapt
 By pale ascetic fervours, to delight
 To kneel to me, the universal voice
 Scorns them as those who, spurning
 wilfully
 The good that Nature offers, dwell un-
 blest
 Who might be blest, but would not.
 Every voice
 Of bard in every age has hymned me.
 All

The breathing marbles, all the glowing
 hues
 Of painting, praise me. Even the love-
 less shades
 Of dim monastic cloisters show some
 gleam,
 Tho' faint, of me. Amid the busy
 throngs
 Of cities reign I, and o'er lonely
 plains,
 Beyond the ice-fields of the frozen
 North
 And the warm waves of undiscovered
 seas.

For I was fashioned from the sparkling
 foam
 Which lights the crest of the blue mystic
 wave,
 Stirred by the wandering breath of Life's
 pure dawn
 From a young soul's clear depths.
 There, without voice,
 Stretched on the breathing curve of a
 young breast,
 Fluttering a little, fresh from the great
 deep
 Of life, and creamy as the opening rose,
 Naked I lie, naked yet unashamed,
 While youth's warm tide steals round
 me with a kiss,
 And floods each limb with fairness.
 Shame I know not—
 Shame is for wrong, and not for inno-
 cence—
 The veil which Error grasps to hide
 itself
 From the awful Eye. But I, I lie un-
 veiled
 And unashamed—the livelong day I
 lie,
 The warm wave murmuring to me ; and,
 all night,

Hidden in the moonlit caves of happy
Sleep,
I dream until the morning and am glad.

Why should I seek to clothe myself,
and hide
The treasure of my Beauty? Shame
may wait
On those for whom 'twas given. The
sties of sense
Are none of mine ; the brutish, loveless
wrong,
The venal charm, the simulated flush
Of fleshly passion, they are none of
mine,
Only corruptions of me. Well I
know
The counterfeit the stronger, since gross
souls
And brutish sway the earth ; yet not the
less
All sense is consecrated, and I deem
'Twere better to grow soft and sink in
sense
Than gloat o'er blood and wrong.

My kingdom is
O'er infinite grades of life. Yet 'tis in
man
I find my worthiest worship. Where
man is,
A youth and a maid, a youth and a
maid, nought else
Is wanting for my temple. Every
clime
Kneels to me—the long breaker falls in
foam
Under the palms, swelling the merry
noise
Of savage bridals, and the straight brown
limbs
Know me, and over all the endless
plains

I reign, and by the tents on the hot
sand
And sea-girt isles am queen, and by the
sides
Of silent mountains, where the white
cots gleam
Upon the green hill pastures, and no
sound
But the thunder of the avalanche is
borne
To the listening rocks around ; and by
fair lands
Where all is peace ; where thro' the
happy hush
Of tranquil summer evenings, 'mid the
corn,
Or thro' cool arches of the gadding
vines,
The lovers stray together hand in hand,
Hymning my praise ; and by the
echoing streets
Of stately cities—o'er the orbèd earth,
The burning South, the icy North, the
old
And immemorial East, the unbounded
West,
No new god comes to spoil me utterly—
All worship and are mine !'
With a sweet smile
Upon her rosy mouth, the goddess
ceased ;
And when she spake no more, the
silence weighed
As heavy on my soul as when it takes
Some gracious melody, and leaves the
ear
Unsatisfied and longing, till the fount
Of sweetness springs again.

But while I stood
Expectant, lo ! a fair pale form drew
near
With front severe, and wide blue eyes
which bore
Mild wisdom in their gaze. Clear
purity
Shone from her—not the young-eyed
innocence
Of her whom first I saw, but that which
comes
From wider knowledge, which restrains
the tide
Of passionate youth, and leads the
musing soul
By the calm deeps of Wisdom. And
I knew
My eyes had seen the fair, the virgin
Queen,
Who once within her shining Parthenon
Beheld the sages kneel.

She with clear voice
And coldly sweet, yet with a softness
too,

Such as befits a virgin :

“ She doth right
To boast her sway, my sister, seeing
indeed

That all things are as by a double law,
And from a double root the tree of
Life

Springs up to the face of heaven. Body
and Soul,

Matter and Spirit, lower joys of Sense
And higher joys of Thought, I know
that both

Build up the shrine of Being. The
brute sense

Leaves man a brute ; but, winged with
soaring thought

Mounts to high heaven. The un-
embodied spirit,

Dwelling alone, unmiated, void of sense,

Shows impotent. And yet I know
there is,

Far off, but not too far for mortal reach,
A calmer height, where, nearer to the
stars,

Thought sits alone and gazes with rapt
gaze,

A large-eyed maiden in a robe of white,
Who brings the light of Knowledge
down, and draws

To her pontifical eyes a bridge of gold,
Which spans from earth to heaven.

For what were life,
If things of sense were all, for those
large souls

And high, whom grudging Nature has
shut fast

Within unlovely forms, or from whose
life

The circuit of the rapid gliding years
Steals the brief gift of beauty? Shall
men hold

With idle singers, all the treasure of
hope

Is lost with youth — swift-fleeting,
treacherous youth,

Which fades and flies before the ripen-
ing brain

Crowns life with Wisdom's crown ?
Nay, even in youth,

Is it not more to tread the difficult
heights

Alone—the cold free heights—and mark
the vale

Lie breathless in the glare, or hidden
and blurred

By cloud and storm ; or pestilence and
war

Creep on with blood and death ; while
the soul dwells

Apart upon the peaks, outfronts the sun
As the eagle does, or takes the coming
dawn

While all the vale is dark, and knows
 the springs
 Of tiny rivulets hurrying from the snows,
 Which soon shall swell to vast resistless
 floods,
 And feed the Oceans which divide the
 World ?

Oh, ecstasy ! oh, wonder ! oh, delight !
 Which neither the slow-withering wear
 of Time,
 That takes all else—the smooth and
 rounded cheek
 Of youth ; the lightsome step ; the
 warm young heart
 Which beats for love or friend ; the
 treasure of hope
 Immeasurable ; the quick-coursing
 blood
 Which makes it joy to be,—ay, takes
 them all
 Or makes them naught—nor yet satiety
 Born of too full possession, takes or
 mars !
 Oh, fair delight of learning ! which
 grows great
 And stronger and more keen, for slower
 limbs,
 And dimmer eyes and loneliness, and
 loss
 Of lower good—wealth, friendship, ay,
 and Love—
 When the swift soul, turning its weary
 gaze
 From the old vanished joys, projects
 itself
 Into the void and floats in empty space,
 Striving to reach the mystic source of
 Things,
 The secrets of the earth and sea and
 air,
 The Law that binds the process of the
 suns,

The awful depths of Mind and Thought ;
 the prime
 Unfathomable mystery of God !

Is there, then, any who holds my
 worship cold
 And lifeless ? Nay, but 'tis the light
 which cheers
 The waning life ! Love thou thy love,
 brave youth !
 Cleave to thy love, fair maid ! it is the
 Law
 Which dominates the world, that bids
 ye use
 Your nature ; but, when now the fuller
 tide
 Slackens a little, turn your calmer eyes
 To the fair page of Knowledge. It is
 power
 I give, and power is precious. It is
 strength
 To live four-square, careless of outward
 shows,
 And self-sufficing. It is clearer sight
 To know the rule of life, the Eternal
 scheme ;
 And, knowing it, to do and not to err,
 And, doing, to be blest.”
 The calm voice soared
 Higher and higher to the close ; the
 cold
 Clear accents, fired as by a hidden fire,
 Glowed into life and tenderness, and
 throbbed
 As with some spiritual ecstasy
 Sweeter than that of Love.

But as they died,
 I heard an ampler voice ; and looking,
 marked

A fair and gracious form. She seemed
 a Queen
 Who ruled o'er gods and men; the
 majesty
 Of perfect womanhood. No opening
 bud
 Of beauty, but the full consummate
 flower
 Was hers; and from her mild large
 eyes looked forth
 Gentle command, and motherhood, and
 home,
 And pure affection. Awe and reverence
 O'erspread me, as I knew my eyes had
 looked
 On sovereign Heré, mother of the gods.

She, with clear, rounded utterance,
 sweet and calm:
 "I know the charm of stainless Inno-
 cence;
 I know Love's fruit is good and fair
 to see
 And taste, if any gain it, and I know
 How brief Youth's Passion-tide, which
 when it ebbs
 Leaves Life athirst for Knowledge, and
 I know
 How fair the realm of Mind, where
 the keen soul
 Yearning to rise, wings its impetuous
 way
 Beyond the bounds of Thought; and
 yet there is
 A higher bliss than theirs, which best
 befits
 A mortal life, compact of Body and Soul,
 And therefore double-natured—a calm
 path
 Which lies before the feet, thro' common
 ways
 And undistinguished crowds of toiling
 men,

And yet is hard to tread, tho' seeming
 smooth,
 And yet, tho' level, finds a worthier
 crown.

For Knowledge is a steep which few
 may climb,
 While Duty is a path which all may tread.
 And if the Goal of Life and Thought
 be this,
 How best to speed the mighty scheme,
 which still
 Fares onward day by day—the Life of
 the World,
 Which is the sum of petty lives, that
 wane
 And die so this may live—how then
 shall each
 Of that great multitude of faithful souls
 Who walk not on the heights, fulfil
 himself,
 But by the duteous Life which looks
 not forth
 Beyond its narrow sphere, and finds its
 work,
 And works it out; content, this done,
 to fall
 And perish, if Fate will, so the great
 Scheme
 Goes onward?

Wherefore am I Queen in Heaven
 And Earth, whose realm is Duty, bear-
 ing rule
 More constant and more wide than
 those whose words
 Thou heardest last. Mine are the
 striving souls
 Of fathers plodding day by day obscure
 And unrewarded, save by their own
 hearts,
 Mid wranglings of the Forum or the mart;
 Who long for joys of Thought, and yet
 must toil

Unmurmuring thro' dull lives from
youth to age ;
Who haply might have worn instead
the crown
Of Honour and of Fame : mine the fair
mothers
Who, for the love of children and of
home,
When passion dies, expend their careful
years
In loving labour sweetened by the
sense
Of Duty : mine the statesman who
toils on
Thro' vigilant nights and days, guiding
his State,
Yet finds no gratitude ; and those white
souls
Who give themselves for others all their
years
In trivial tasks of Pity. The fine
growths
Of Man and Time are mine, and spend
themselves
For me and for the mystical End which
lies
Beyond their gaze and mine, and yet is
good,
Tho' hidden from men and gods.
For as the flower
Of the tiger-lily gay with varied hues
Is for a day, then fades and leaves be-
hind
Fairness nor fruit, while the green tiny
tuft
Swell to the purple of the clustering
grape
Or golden waves of wheat ; so lives of
men
Which show most splendid, fade and
are deceased
And leave no trace ; while those, un-
marked, unseen,

Which no man recks of, rear the stately
tree
Of Knowledge, not for itself sought
out, but found
In the dusty ways of life—a fairer growth
Than springs in cloistered shades ; and
from the sun
Of Duty, blooms sweeter and more
divine
The fair ideal of the Race, than comes
From glittering gains of Learning.
Life, full life,
Full-flowered, full-fruited, reared from
homely earth,
Rooted in duty, and thro' long calm
years
Bearing its load of healthful energies ;
Stretching its arms on all sides ; fed
with dews
Of cheerful sacrifice, and clouds of care,
And rain of useful tears ; warmed by
the sun
Of calm affection, till it breathes itself
In perfume to the heavens—this is the
prize
I hold most dear, more precious than
the fruit
Of Knowledge or of Love.”
The goddess ceased
As dies some gracious harmony, the
child
Of wedded themes which single and
alone
Were discords, but united breathe a
sound
Sweet as the sounds of heaven.

And then stood forth
The last of the gods I saw, the first in
place

And dignity and beauty, the young
god
Who grows not old, the Light of
Heaven and Earth,
The Worker from afar, who darts the
fire
Of inspiration on the bard and bathes
The world in hues of heaven—the
golden link
Between High God and Man.

With a sweet voice
Whose every note was perfect me-
lody—

The melody has fled, the words re-
main—

Apollo sang :

“ I know how fair the face
Of Purity ; I know the treasure of
Strength ;

I know the charm of Love, the calmer
grace

Of Wisdom and of Duteous well-spent
lives :

And yet there is a loftier height than
these.

There is a Height higher than mortal
thought ;

There is a Love warmer than mortal
love ;

There is a Life which, taking not its
hues

From Earth or earthly things, grows
white and pure

And higher than the petty cares of
men,

And is a blessed life and glorified.

Oh, fair young souls, strain upward,
upward still,

Even to the heavenly source of Purity !
Brave hearts, bear on and suffer !

Strike for right,

Strong arms, and hew down wrong !
The world hath need
Of all of you—the sensual, wrongful
world !

Hath need of you, and of thee too,
fair Love.

Oh, lovers, cling together ! the old
world

Is full of Hate. Sweeten it ; draw in
one

Two separate chords of Life ; and
from the bond

Of twin souls lost in Harmony create
A Fair God dwelling with you—Love
the Lord !

Waft yourselves, yearning souls, upon
the stars ;

Sow yourselves on the wandering winds
of space ;

Watch patient all your days, if your
eyes take

Some dim, cold ray of Knowledge.
The dull world

Hath need of you — the purblind,
slothful world !

Live on, brave lives, chained to the
narrow round

Of Duty ; live, expend yourselves, and
make

The orb of Being wheel on steadfastly
Upon its path—the Lord of Life
alone

Knows to what goal of Good ; work on,
live on :

And yet there is a higher work than
yours.

To have looked upon the face of the
Unknown

And Perfect Beauty. To have heard
the voice

Of Godhead in the winds and in the
seas.

To have known Him in the circling of
the suns,

And in the changeful fates and lives of
men.

To be fulfilled with Godhead as a cup
Filled with a precious essence, till the
hand

On marble or on canvas falling, leaves
Celestial traces, or from reed or string
Draws out faint echoes of the voice
Divine

That bring God nearer to a faithless
world.

Or, higher still and fairer and more
blest,

To be His seer, His prophet ; to be
the voice

Of the Ineffable Word ; to be the glass
Of the Ineffable Light, and bring them
down

To bless the earth, set in a shrine of
Song.

For Knowledge is a barren tree and
bare,

Bereft of God, and Duty but a word,
And Strength but Tyranny, and Love,
Desire,

And Purity a folly ; and the Soul,
Which brings down God to Man, the
Light to the world ;

He is the Maker, and is blest, is blest !”

He ended, and I felt my soul grow
faint

With too much sweetness.

In a mist of grace

They faded, that bright company, and
seemed

To melt into each other and shape
themselves

Into new forms, and those fair god-
desses

Blent in a perfect woman—all the calm
High motherhood of Heré, the sweet
smile

Of Cypris, fair Athené’s earnest eyes,
And the young purity of Artemis,
Blent in a perfect woman ; and in her
arms,

Fused by some cosmic interlacing curves
Of Beauty into a new Innocence,
A child with eyes divine, a little child,
A little child—no more.

And those great gods

Of Power and Beauty left a heavenly
form

Strong not to act but suffer ; fair and
meek,

Not proud and eager ; with soft eyes
of grace,

Not bold with joyous youth ; and for
the fire

Of song, and for the happy careless life,
A sorrowful pilgrimage—changed, yet
the same,

Only Diviner far ; and bearing higher
The Life God-lighted and the Sacrifice.

And when these faded wholly, at my
side,

Tho’ hidden before by those too-radiant
forms,

I was aware once more of her, my guide
Psyche, who had not left me, floating
near

On golden wings ; and all the plains of
heaven

Were left to us, me and my soul alone.

Then when my thought revived
again, I said

Whispering, "But Zeus I saw not, the
prime Source
And Sire of all the gods."

And she, bent low

With downcast eyes: "Nay. Thou
hast seen of Him

All that thine eyes can bear, in those
fair forms

Which are but parts of Him and are
indeed

Attributes of the Substance which sup-
ports

The Universe of Things—the Soul of
the World,

The Stream which flows Eternal, from
no Source

Into no Sea. His Purity, His Strength,
His Love, His Knowledge, His un-
changing rule

Of Duty, thou hast seen, only a part
And not the whole, being a finite mind
Too weak for infinite thought; nor,
couldst thou see

All of Him visible to mortal sight,
Wouldst thou see all His essence, since
the gods—

Glorified essences of Human mould,
Who are but Zeus made visible to
men—

See Him not wholly, only some thin
edge

And halo of His glory; nor know they
What vast and unsuspected Universes
Lie beyond thought, where yet He
rules, like those

Vast Suns we cannot see, round which
our Sun

Moves with his system, or those darker
still

Which not even thus we know, but yet
exist

Tho' no eye marks, nor thought itself,
and lurk

In the awful Depths of Space; or that
which is

Not orb'd as yet, but indiscrete, con-
fused,

Sown thro' the void—the faintest gleam
of light

Which sets itself to Be. And yet He
lives

There too, and rules, none seeing.
But sometimes

To this our heaven, which is so like to
earth

But nearer to Him, for awhile He shows
Some gleam of His own brightness, and
methinks

It cometh soon; but thou, if thou
shouldst gaze,

Thy Life will rush to His—the tiny
spark

Absorbed in that full blaze—and what
there is

Of mortal fall from thee."

But I: "Oh, soul,

What holdeth Life more precious than
to know

The Giver and to die?"

Then she: "Behold!

Look upward and adore."

And with the word,

Unhasting, undelaying, gradual, sure,
The floating cloud which clothed the
hidden peak

Rose slow in awful silence, laying bare
Spire after rocky spire, snow after snow,
Whiter and yet more dreadful, till at
last

It left the summit clear.

Then with a bound,

In the twinkling of an eye, in the flash
of a thought,

I knew an Awful Effluence of Light,
Formless, Ineffable, Perfect, burst on
me

And flood my being round, and draw
 my life
 Into itself. I saw my guide bent down
 Prostrate, her wings before her face ;
 and then
 No more.

—————

But when I woke from my long
 trance
 Behold, it was no longer Tartarus,
 Nor Hades, nor Olympus, but the bare
 And unideal aspect of the fields
 Which Spring not yet had kissed—the
 strange old Earth
 So far more fabulous now than in the
 days
 When Man was young, nor yet the
 mystery
 Of Time and Fate transformed it. From
 the hills,
 The long night fled at last, the un-
 clouded sun,
 The dear, fair sun, leapt upward swift,
 and smote
 My sight with rays of gold, and pierced
 my brain
 With too much light ere my entranced
 eyes
 Could hide themselves.

And I was on the Earth
 Dreaming the dream of Life again, as
 late

I dreamed the dream of Death.

Another day
 Dawned on the race of men ; another
 world ;
 New heavens, and new earth.

And as I went
 Across the lightening fields, upon a
 bank
 I saw a single snowdrop glance, and
 bring
 Promise of Spring ; and keeping my
 old thought
 In the old fair Hellenic vesture dressed,
 I felt myself a ghost, and seemed to be
 Now fair Adonis hasting to the arms
 Of his lost love—now sad Persephone
 Restored to mother earth—or that high
 shade
 Orpheus, who gave up heaven to save
 his love,
 And is rewarded—or young Marsyas,
 Who spent his youth and life for song,
 and yet
 Was happy though in torture—or the
 fair
 And dreaming youth I saw, who still
 awaits,
 Hopeful, the unveiling heaven, when
 he shall see
 His fair ideal love. The birds sang
 blithe ;
 There came a tinkling from the waking
 fold ;
 And on the hillside from the cot a girl
 Tripped singing with her pitcher. All
 the sounds
 And thoughts which still are beautiful—
 Youth, Song,
 Dawn, Spring, Renewal—and my soul
 was glad
 Of all the freshness, and I felt again
 The youth and spring-tide of the world,
 and thought,
 Which feigned those fair and gracious
 fantasies.

For every dawn that breaks brings a
 .. new world,

And every budding bosom a new life ;
 These fair tales, which we know so
 beautiful,
 Show only finer than our lives to-day
 Because their voice was clearer, and
 they found
 A sacred bard to sing them. We are
 pent,
 Who sing to-day, by all the garnered
 wealth
 Of ages of past song. We have no
 more
 The world to choose from, who,
 where'er we turn,
 Tread through old thoughts and fair.
 Yet must we sing—
 We have no choice ; and if more hard
 the toil
 In noon, when all is clear, than in the
 fresh
 White mists of early morn, yet do we
 find
 Achievement its own guerdon, and at
 last
 The rounder song of manhood grows
 more sweet
 Than the high note of youth.
 For Age, long Age !
 Nought else divides us from the fresh
 young days
 Which men call ancient ; seeing that
 we in turn
 Shall one day be Time's ancients, and
 inspire
 The wiser, higher race, which yet shall
 sing
 Because to sing is human, and high
 thought
 Grows rhythmic ere its close. Nought
 else there is
 But that weird beat of Time, which
 doth disjoin
 To-day from Hellas.

How should any hold
 Those precious scriptures only old-
 world tales
 Of strange impossible torments and
 false gods ;
 Of men and monsters in some brainless
 dream,
 Coherent, yet unmeaning, linked to-
 gether
 By some false skein of song ?
 Nay ! evermore,
 All things and thoughts, both new and
 old, are writ
 Upon the unchanging human heart and
 soul.
 Has Passion still no prisoners ? Pine
 there now
 No lives which fierce Love, sinking into
 Lust,
 Has drowned at last in tears and blood
 —plunged down
 To the blackest depths of Hell ? Have
 not strong Will
 And high Ambition rotted into Greed
 And Wrong, for any, as of old, and
 whelmed
 The struggling soul in ruin ? Hell lies
 near
 Around us as does Heaven, and in the
 World,
 Which is our Hades, still the chequered
 souls
 Compact of good and ill—not all accurst
 Nor altogether blest—a few brief years
 Travel the little journey of their lives,
 They know not to what end. The
 weary woman
 Sunk deep in ease and sated with her life,
 Much loved and yet unloving, pines
 to-day
 As Helen ; still the poet strives and sings,
 And hears Apollo's music, and grows
 dumb,

And suffers, yet is happy; still the young
 Fond dreamer seeks his high ideal love,
 And finds her name is Death; still
 doth the fair
 And innocent life, bound naked to the
 rock,
 Redeem the race; still the gay tempter
 goes
 And leaves his victim, stone; still
 common pain
 Binds souls with closer links of nobler
 love,
 Than Death itself can sever; still the
 sight
 Of too great beauty blinds us, and we
 lose
 The sense of earthly splendours, gaining
 Heaven.

And still the skies are opened as of
 old
 To the entranced gaze, ay, nearer far
 And brighter than of yore; and Might
 is there,
 And Infinite Purity is there, and high
 Eternal Wisdom, and the calm clear face
 Of Duty, and a higher, stronger Love
 And Light in one, and a new, reverend
 Name,

Greater than any and combining all;
 And over all, veiled with a veil of cloud,
 God set far off, too bright for mortal
 eyes.

And always, always, with each soul
 that comes
 And goes, comes that fair form which
 was my guide,
 Hovering, with golden wings and eyes
 divine,
 Above the bed of birth, the bed of
 death,
 Still breathing heavenly airs of death-
 less love.

For while a youth is lost in soaring
 thought,
 And while a maid grows sweet and
 beautiful,
 And while a spring-tide coming lights
 the earth,
 And while a child, and while a flower
 is born,
 And while one wrong cries for redress
 and finds
 A soul to answer, still the world is
 young!

GWEN.

PROLOGUE.

Not of old time alone
 Was Life a scene of hopes and fears,
 High joys and bitter tears;
 Nor Chance nor Fate are done;
 Nor from our fuller Day
 The fabled gods have wholly fled away;

The World and Man to-day are young
 As when blind Homer sung.

What if the old forms change?
 They were but forms, the things remain.
 What if our fear and pain
 Show not like monsters strange?

The self-same path of life
 We tread, who fare beneath the sun
 to-day ;
 We sink or triumph in the strife
 No otherwise than they.

Compact of good and ill
 Their life of old was, as is ours ;
 The same mysterious Will
 Controlled their finite powers
 And to strange thoughts of Fate
 And workings of a fixed Necessity
 Which rules both small and great.
 As they bowed, so bow we.

And Love, the Lord and King—
 Not Eros, but diviner far—
 Still upon heavenward wing
 Mounts like a shining star.
 Than clouds and thunders stronger,
 He brings a clear ray from the invisible
 Sun ;
 And when he shines no longer,
 Life's play is done.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

The sweet cold air of these untrodden
 hills
 Breathes gently. From the bustle of
 the inn
 I turn refreshed to this free mountain-
 side,
 And listen to the innumerable sound
 Of the loud brook beneath, which roars
 and spumes
 Brown-white against the granite. These
 thick firs
 Shed balm upon the evening air ; there
 comes

No footstep but the rabbit's or the
 shrew's
 Upon this grassy path, which winds
 and winds
 Around the hill-side, under promon-
 tories
 Of gold and purple, to the grey old
 church,
 Where, chancing yesterday at eve, I
 caught
 The sound of hymns, richer and fuller
 far
 Than those of yore ; and, hidden within
 the porch,
 Heard the prayers rising in a tongue
 unknown,
 But musical as Greek ; and not un-
 moved
 Watched the loud preacher, firing with
 his theme,
 Grow rhythmic, and the answering
 moans which showed
 He touched the peasant heart.

Ah, it was long

Since I had heard men pray. I have
 seen the cloud
 Of incense rolling to the fretted roofs
 Of dim cathedrals in the fair old lands
 Where Faith weds not with Reason ; I
 have heard
 The Benediction service, pure and
 sweet,
 Lit by young voices ; I have watched
 with fear
 In college aisles the polished, delicate
 priest
 Poise his smooth periods on the razor
 edge
 Of a too fine-drawn logic ; I have stood
 And listened all unmoved, or all
 ashamed
 That I was moved a little, by the
 trick

And artifice of speech which, though I
 knew it,
 Could cheat the heart a moment, while
 the preacher
 Enchained his ignorant thousands.
 None of these
 Moved me as that unknown tongue
 yesterday.
 I thought my faith reviving. Tush !
 what folly !
 That died long years ago from the roots,
 dried up
 By the strong glare of knowledge, nor
 could aught
 Of all the miracles the Churchmen
 feign
 E'er water it to life. That died long
 since,
 Struck dead by German learning and
 the strong
 And arrogant Priests of Science. Yet
 God knows—
 If God there be—I would give my life
 to know
 The strong Belief of old, when little
 hands
 Were folded morn and eve, and little
 eyes
 Scarce open from the night, or half
 weighed down
 By the long hours of play, were raised
 to see
 Heaven in a mother's gaze.
 I would my soul
 Might cast from it the dead unlovely
 load
 Of dead men's speculations, rottennesses
 Born of unloving lives which took the
 cell
 And cloister for the home, the mid-
 night lamp
 For the glow of the hearth, and palsied
 limbs of doubt

For the strong sire's firm stride. I am
 young still ;
 Yet often, when the flash of racing
 oars,
 The shouts, the rushing feet, the joyous
 din,
 Floated along the avenues at eve
 To my still college chamber ; there
 would come
 A weariness, a surfeit, a distaste
 Of all the painted show which men call
 life,
 Of all the sensual flush which men call
 love,
 Of all the hollow, vain logomachies
 Men take for learning, and I seemed to
 live
 In premature decay, and to have touched
 The fruit of life with eager lips and
 found it
 Crumble away in dust. And yet I know
 How little 'tis my few laborious years
 Have given me of learning that might
 take
 The utmost space of our allotted years,
 Yet leave us still unquenched. And
 yet what bar—
 But seven little years—comes there that
 parts
 Me and my boyhood ? Seven fleeting
 years !
 And still I am a youth in frame, in
 mind,
 In innocence of harm in thought or
 deed,
 In scorn of wrong, and of the sensual
 sty
 Wherein the boor lies bound. Only
 some power
 There is which holds me fast and binds
 my will ;
 Only some dim and paralyzing force
 Freezes the springs of action, till I lie

Moored in some tideless and forgotten
creek,
A ship which lies and rots ; while on
high seas
The salt winds blow, the white crests
break, the sail,
Filled with the stress of hope and youth
and act,
Speeds to the unseen harbour.

What shall cure
This sickness of the soul? I would
that I

Were like that peasant lad whom yester-
eve

I saw—a stalwart boy, on whose red
cheek

The down of manhood showed ; whose
strong arm wound

Around his sweetheart's waist, as free
from shame,

While down the village street they
loitered slow

As 'twere the end of life to grow and
breed

And die, as do his herds. Yet here again
I hesitate to act, because I know

What love is in its cause, what in its
end,

And by what secret, miry paths full oft
The winged god steals, when all his
violet plumes

Are smirched with foulness, and his
fair eyes droop,

Cloyed with the grosser sweets of lower
earth,

And the keen arrow flies not through
the skies,

But drops a blunted shaft.

I would I knew
Less, or grew wiser, knowing. Golden
hair,

Sweet eyes, the lithe young form, the
girlish voice

Which issues forth so soft from the red
lips

Arched like the bow of Cupid, the soft
neck

Like a white pillar ; these were charms
enow

I warrant, which might draw as by a
spell

The rustic youth around. Yes, she was
fair

And sweet to see, and better, from her
eyes

A pure young soul looked forth, which
was well housed

Within so pure a body.—“Gwen” he
called her—

'Tis a fair name—when by the vicarage
gate

Her father stayed a moment courteously
To greet the stranger, and her shy
glance turned

And met my tell-tale eyes. Surely a
man

Who had seen the hollowness of things
might here

Dwell not unhappy — purple hills
around,

And great tranquillity—a wife's sweet
smile

Beside him ; little hands to draw him
back

To the kindly earth ; and all the
healthy load

Of daily liturgies which make a heaven
Of earth, and doubt a madness.

Tush ! what folly
Is this? Have I not passed these things
and spurned

The weakness from me—I, who have
given years

Of youth to learning, and am tired a
while

Of my mistress, nothing more?

And yet, what hope
Was it that brought me hither, this
last night

I spend among the mountains? Was
it to watch

The sunset glories smite the golden sea,
Or hear the fairy rivulet fall in foam
Among the pines? Or was it that I
thought

Perchance a slender form might pass
this way,

Crowned with the crown of youth, and
a sweet voice

Answer my eager greeting? Oh, what
fools

And hypocrites are we, when a strong
Power

Within us, unsuspected, binds us fast
And guides our footsteps! It was not
the face

Of outward nature, but the secret
spring

Which sets our Being to a hidden
end,

And bears the name of Love.

A gleam of blue,
A hat white-plumed—there is no other
form

As graceful; it is she! I may not
love,

Who cannot wed. I shall not see her
more.

I am young still; I will but look a
moment

In those young eyes, and hear that
sweet young voice

Refine our common English, and to-
morrow

She will forget the stranger who was
kind,

And I the mountain-nymph who was
so fair.

SCENE II.

I know not why my books,
The learning that I loved, the charm
of art

Should for a young girl's looks
Fade from my thought and vanish and
depart.

It was but yesterday
I loved to pore upon the classic page
From morn to eve, nor could the
damsels gay,

Who from the parching town
Flock to these pure cool heights, move
me at all.

'Twas rest enough to roam
On the hill-side contented all day long,
And watch the shadows come
O'er moor and hill and purple wastes
of sea;

To see the evening fall
On breathless hill and dale, till sud-
denly

The pale moon rose; then wander
homeward slow

To my loved books with cheek with
health aglow.

And now nor hill, nor dale nor sea,
Nor the old task sufficeth me.

For two days since, ere night could
fall,

There came a young girl eighteen
summers old—

A simple girl, half peasant, lithe and
tall,

With deep-blue eyes and hair of gold;
And straightway my philosophy,

My learning, all forsaking me,
Left me a love-sick boy—no more—

Me who have drunk so deep of wiser
lore!

Too wise, I thought, to rest content
 With any childish blandishment ;
 Too wise ! ah fool ! for looking in
 such eyes,
 'Twere folly to be wise.

For as she tripped round the hill
 To visit some cottage lowly,
 With her basket of food on her arm,
 She showed like Artemis holy ;
 And I doffed to her, and she knew
 The stranger of yesternight,
 And her soft eyes showed more blue
 As the rose on her cheek grew bright ;
 And, some power impelling me, I—
 I who was always counted so shy—
 I walked by her side a little, though I
 know
 That my tongue was tied and my brain
 was slow ;
 But however it was, yet her eyes were
 blue,
 And her roses all aglow.

And I walked by her side till she
 came
 To the cottage door, where we parted,
 And a mingling of pride and of shame
 Rose and left me awhile half-hearted.
 I to stoop to a simple girl,
 The child of a peasant sire !
 Though the gown of the clergyman hides
 many faults,
 Surely 'twas mine to aspire.
 What would they say—my friends,
 The pale students, polished and proud,
 If I, the first of them, stooped to take
 A wife from the vulgar crowd ?
 Or she, my dear mother, whose pride
 Lies hid so deep in the depths of her
 heart,
 There is scarcely one of us knows it is
 there ?

Or my father, the Earl, to whom life
 is no more
 Than a long procession of hound and
 horse,
 To whom hardly dishonour itself seems
 worse
 Than to wed out of one's degree ?

And I wandered out over the hill
 For an hour of doubt or more,
 And then, so it happened, my feet drew
 near
 To that humble cottage door ;
 And I saw her come forth with a child
 on her arm,
 Pale-faced and hollow-eyed,
 And she seemed a pagan goddess no
 more,
 But a fair Madonna, with all the charm
 Of San Sisto or of the Chair.

And then, as over the hill
 We walked back again, though her
 voice was still,
 Surely was never a man so full
 Of chattering talk as I.
 But she was not angry at all, not she ;
 But from that calm vantage of wise
 eighteen
 And with only a modest word or so,
 And a sweet voice, and musical accent
 low,
 She would bend her delicate ear to
 me,
 And listen, as grave and as calm as a
 queen,
 To the talk which meant little enough,
 maybe,
 But was understood, I ween.

But however it was, I know
 When we came to the gate, and her
 little hand

Slid shyly out, as she wished me good-
bye,
That as I turned to go
My feet seemed winged on the slope
of the hills,
And I hardly knew that the cold half-
sleet
Which blots the clouded mountain and
chills
The unsheltered wayfarer, wrapping
me round,
Had drenched me. For up the silent
street
Of the darkling village, jubilant sound
Compassed me; sunlight beamed on
me still;
And even to my high inn-chamber I
seemed
To be treading that breezy hill.

What is the charm that wakes
The bud, the flower, the fruit, from the
cold ground?
What is the power that makes
With song the groves, with song the
fields, resound?
One spell there is, so strong to move;
Some call it Spring, and others Love.

I thought my heart lay dead—
Sad heart, long buried deep in dusty
lore!—
But now, the winter fled,
It beats with quicker beat than e'er
before.—
A simple girl, yet can she move
Spring in my soul, the Spring of Love!

Strange fable that they taught
Of old, of souls divided as in twain,

Each by the other sought
Until the sundered reunite again,
And then the severed members move,
Knit by the magic spell of Love!

Ah, let us be at one,
Dear soul, if one we be, and are of kin
Before the world begun;
Sure 'tis that I was made thy soul to
win.
Ah, child, if we might upward move,
Borne on the golden wings of Love!

SCENE III.

What is it the village leech
Tells me of fever and chill,
And bids me keep warm? Well, per-
haps it were wise;
For I fail to sleep, and my limbs are
as lead,
And a ceaseless throbbing distracts my
head,
And they warned me of this, I re-
member, again and again.
But surely I know that, came wind or
rain,
If only my weary limbs could reach
To that little gate on the breezy hill
And I saw the desire of my eyes,
I should take little thought of myself,
not I,
Not even were I doomed to die.

SCENE IV.

What is this? And where am I?
This is not the high inn-chamber, I
know,
This white little room where the sunset-
glow
On the white bed-curtains, as I lie,

Makes orange shadows which fade and
fleet ;
Nor are these my first nurse's reluctant
feet
Which steal so lightly and daintily
round,
As if grudging the faintest ghost of a
sound ;
Nor was the soft voice I heard
Last night, when the curtain was
silently stirred,
The village doctor's at all :
I have heard it before, but when, I
cannot recall.

For there comes a sense on my brain
Of time that is gone but has left no
trace
But days which passed and left nothing
behind,
Yet upon the secret depths of the mind
Deep graven that nought may erase.
As the patient metal retains the sound
Of the living voice that is dead,
Even so doth my being retain
A long procession of days and nights,
Weary and suffering and heavily sped ;
And then for a moment the cool air
strikes,
As some one carries me tenderly down,
And slowly the wheels of my litter
climb,
Leaving the streets of the little town,
Up the hill through the scented pines.

And then all is blank for a time ;
A long time, surely, when nothing came
But wandering dreams and a whispered
name,
Repeated often and like a charm,
To keep off fancied phantoms of harm.
"Gwen," was it? Somewhere I seem
to recall,

Far away in some world of forgotten
things,
A fair young face which I loved to see ;
And one night in this room it smiled on
me,
And the ghastly shapes spread their
horrible wings
And left me at rest for a while.

Ah, no ! I did not dream it at all,
For now for a week she comes every
day,
A young nurse, virginal, white, and
tall,
And her father, the vicar, whose kind
eyes beam
With a genial kindness he cannot
speak ;
For if ever he ventures a word, it is gall
To one who is peevish and weak,
And his words struggle out like stones
in a stream,
Jerked together, and jostled, and bat-
tered away,
Till I long that he had done.

But she, my Artemis pure and fair,
My Madonna, who stood at the cottage
gate—
She is perfect, I hold, from the crown
of her hair
To the dainty sole of her delicate foot ;
And her hand and her voice are as soft
as silk,
And she comes hour by hour with a
tender care,
With my draught or my food, or with
rich cool milk.
Ah ! if only—— What, am I then
worse than the brute,

That I stoop to thoughts that I loathe
and hate—

I, a great peer's only son ?

For I see on the walls of my simple
room,

Which I know was her own, the work
of her hand,

At night, in the firelight's flickering
gloom,

This text emblazoned in letters of
gold—

“For whom Christ dièd.” Ah, if
indeed

His words were the words of a real
doom,

And his faith the faith of a living
creed !

But now souls and beliefs are bargained
and sold,

There is no belief by which men may
stand,

There is neither creed nor God !

But whether there be or be not indeed,
It shall not change me nor move my
mind.

Shall I who hate to see weak things
bleed,

From the hare which shrieks, to the
trout on the hook,

Play false with the simple heart of a
maid,

Till her poor soul pines with a terrible
need ?

I dare not do it ; I am afraid

To see the young soul, with a hopeless
look,

Go out for the truth which it cannot
find

By dark ways, of truth untrod.

She shall keep unassailed her young
innocent heart,

For aught to be whispered by me or
done ;

She shall hold her faith ; but 'tis best
we part,

For hearts break daily and white lives
fade,

And 'twere better indeed I had never
been born,

Than to bring a young life to sorrow
and woe,

And leave a pure saint to the cold
world's scorn,

Shrinking back from the wreck which
myself had made.

No, of all the wrong-doing beneath the
sun,

Not this one be mine, oh God !

White room ! white curtain ! little bed
That once was hers, whereon she lay
So warm and still, her sunny head
Safe pillowed till the growing day !

I bless you and I love you all.
I feel so young who once seemed old.
I see a lithe girl-figure, tall,
With grave blue eyes and hair of gold,

Stand by the half-closed door when he,
The village doctor, yesternight,
Came stealthily and looked on me,
With noiseless step and shaded light ;

And I, who deep in lethargy
Seemed buried, to a careless eye,
Lay all unmoved, till suddenly
I caught the echo of a sigh,

And, looking up, beheld my dear,
The first love of my weary heart,
Stand pitiful, and marked the tear
In the soft eye unbidden start.

Yet no prognostics dire they were
He launched against me ; only these :
Torpor and weakness, needing care
And watchfulness for remedies ;

And, seeing that I saw and heard,
Turned to me with a cheerful face,
And spoke some random hopeful word,
And nodded smiling to the place,

Where stood the stair. But I, I knew
A sudden rush of hope and strength,
And cared not when, if but at length,
My new-born thought should turn out
true.

SCENE V.

Oh, joy ! I grow stronger day by day ;
And day by day in the sweet summer
weather

I wander over the hills, and away
High up 'mid the purple masses of
heather,

Till mounting aloft with no one by,
All in the bountiful summer weather,
I drink in new life from every pore,
Throbbing and bourgeoning more and
more

In every limb and with every breath,
As, laid on the heather, I watch the
sky

And the purple shadows on sea and
hill,

And hear no sound but the bee's deep
hum,

And watch the shy mountain-sheep
timidly come,

And the kestrel circling, aloft on the
rocky brow,

Fulfilling the marvellous mission of
Death and of Pain.

Death ! ah, but that is far from me
now,

Vanished with Pain and its legions of
Ill.

I can walk with my limbs, I can leap,
I can run ;

I rejoice in my strength : the day of
weakness is done.

I live, I grow strong ; I am one with
the World and with Life again.

And sometimes, rare blessing, there
comes with me

A fair young Mountain-nymph over the
hill,

Fearless and free from a thought of
ill.

For her mother, who came of gentler
blood,

Who was always delicate, kind, and
good—

Her mother died long ago, and she
Has lived from her childhood fearless
and free.

I think no touch of passion as yet
Has moved her. Only pity made wet
Her eyes on that night which awoke
my love.

I am only a friend more mature and
wise

Than any she knows, and a shamed
surprise

Would wake in the sapphire depths of
her eyes,

If she saw what blind and passionate
longings move

Within the hidden thoughts of a man.

Ah, well ! but nature is twofold, and sure
 It were not wise to ban
 The instincts which are neither gross
 nor pure.
 Let him suppress them who can.
 It is only in thought I invade her
 virginal peace,
 For I know that this sweet rehearsal
 of love must cease,
 For I am not my own ; but my wife
 to be,
 Stately and beautiful, waits for me
 With that which suffices to build up
 our shattered wealth.
 Ay, but what if love, awaking and
 coming by stealth,
 Should bind me in chains on this wild
 Welsh hill ?
 Or hurry me downward, downward, to
 fathomless ill ?
 Tush ! how should I be a devil if there
 be not a God ?
 I am only a young man in whom the
 young blood
 Pulses quickly, and have I no gratitude
 For the life which she saved, the life
 which is grown so sweet,
 As we roam o'er these breeze-swept
 uplands with rapid young feet ?
 Oh, joy ! I am one with the life of the
 hills, and the skies, and of man !

SCENE VI.

It is done ! I have told her I love her,
 Yester-eve as we walked together,
 Some power grown tyrannous holding
 me fast,
 Blotting alike the Future and Past ;
 And for answer she gave but a sigh
 and a start,

And a blush as bright as the purple
 heather,
 And a little flutter of bosom and heart,
 And a glow like the hues of the sunset
 above her.
 Oh, fair ash-grove where I told my
 love !
 Fair ash-grove dear to Cymric verse
 Since their bard who sang thee when
 Chaucer was young !
 Fairest of groves that were ever sung !
 Oh, fairest sunset of all that have shone
 Since man first woke in Paradise
 garden,
 Before the temptation, the ruin, the
 curse,
 Before the strange story was over and
 done,
 And man an outcast hopeless of pardon !
 As we sat on the mossy bank, she and I,
 And no creature was near with intrusive
 eye,
 To mark our innocent joy !
 Sweet day when love awakens and
 stands,
 With his free limbs bare and his out-
 stretched hands,
 Before two young shame-fast natures
 which yearn
 With innocent yearning : clear fires
 that burn
 Free from all baser alloy.
 It is done ; it is over ; and never Eve,
 The mother of maidens who love and
 grieve,
 Looked fairer than did Gwen,
 This peasant maiden, when first she
 heard
 The one ineffable, passionate word
 Which stirs for ever the hearts of
 maidens and of men.

The bud on the bough,
 The song of the bird,
 The blue river-reaches
 By soft breezes stirred ;
 Oh, soul, and hast thou found again
 thy treasure ?
 Oh, world, and art thou once more filled
 with pleasure ?
 Oh, world, hast thou passed
 Thy sad winter again ?
 Oh, soul, hast thou cast
 Thy dull vesture of pain ?
 Oh ! winter, sad wert thou and full of
 sorrow ;
 Oh soul, oh world, the summer comes
 to-morrow !

Oh, soul ! 'tis love quickens
 Time's languorous feet ;
 Oh, world ! 'tis Spring wakens
 Thy fair blossoms sweet ;
 Fair world, fair soul, that lie so close
 together,
 Each with sad wintry days and fair
 Spring weather !

As on the clear hill-sides we walked
 together,
 A gleam of purple passed over the sea,
 And, glad with the joy of the summer
 weather,
 My love turned quickly and looked on
 me.
 Ah, the glad summer weather, the fair
 summer weather !
 Ah, the purple shadow on hill and sea !

And I looked in her eyes as we walked
 together,
 And knew the shy secret she fain would
 hide,

And we went hand in hand through the
 blossoming heather,
 She who now was my sweetheart, and
 I by her side ;
 For the shade was the shadow of Love's
 wing-feather,
 Which bares, as he rises, the secrets we
 hide.

Now, come cloud or sunshine, come
 joy or weeping,
 It can be no longer as 'twas before.
 Just a shadow of change o'er the soul
 comes creeping,
 And farewell to the joyance and freedom
 of yore ;
 For it crosses Love's face, where he
 lies a-sleeping,
 And he soars awaking, nor slumbers
 more.

I have found her !
 At last, after long wanderings, dull
 delays,
 I have found her ;
 And all my life is tuned to joy and
 praise.
 I have found her !

A myriad-myriad times
 In man's long history this thing has
 been ;
 All ages, climes,
 This daily, hourly miracle have seen
 A myriad-myriad times ;

Yet is it new to-day.
 I have found her, and a new Spring
 glads my eyes.
 World, fair and gay

As when Eve woke in dewy Paradise,
Fade not away !

Fade not, oh light,
Lighting the eyes of yet another pair,
But let my sight
Find her as I have found her, pure and
fair !
Shine, mystic light !

Yes, it is sweet to be
Awaited, and to know another heart
Beats faster for our coming, and to see
The blush unbidden start
To the fair cheek, and mark young
Love's alarms
Perturb and make more fair the girlish
charms.

I am once more
A young man with the passions of my
kind ;
I am no pedant, glorying as before
In barren realms of mind.
The springtide that awakens land and
sea,
The Spring of Youth and Love,
awakens me.

It calls, and all my life
Answers from its dim depths, "I come,
I hear."
It breaks, it bursts, in sudden hope and
strife,
And precious chills of fear.
It comes with tremulous, furtive thrills
which can
Strip from me all the Past, and leave
me, man.

SCENE VII.—GWEN.

Dear hills, dear vales, so calm and
bright
In dewy dawn, in silvery night !
Dear woods and uplands cool and wild,
Where yesterday I walked a child,
I love you, but I roam no more
With all the careless joy of yore.
My girlish days are past and done ;
I know my womanhood begun.

What was it one so wise could see
In an untutored child like me ?
What was it ? Nay, 'twere sin to
prove
By earthly tests the ways of love.
Whate'er it was, Love's perfect way
Is without doubting to obey.

I do obey. I lay my soul
Low at Love's feet for his control.
Farewell, oh paths half hidden in
flowers,
Trodden by young feet in childish
hours ;
White bed, white room, and girlish
home !
The hour of Love and Life is come !

I shall not watch as yesterday
The orange sunset fade to gray,
Nor roam unfettered as the bee,
A maiden heart and fancy free.
I am bound by such a precious chain
I may not wander forth again,

Oh, bond divine ! oh, sweet, sweet
chain !

Oh, mingling of ecstatic pain !
I am a simple girl no more.
I would not have it as before.

One day of love, one brief, sweet day,
And all my past is swept away.

Oh, *vermeil* rose and sweet,
Rose with the golden heart of hidden
fire,
Bear thou my yearning soul to him I
love,
Bear thou my longing and desire.

Glide safe, oh sweet, sweet rose,
By fairy-fall and cliff and mimic strand,
To where he muses by the sleeping
stream,
Then eddy to his hand.

Drown not, oh *vermeil* rose,
But from thy dewy petals let a tear
Fall soft for joy when thou shalt know
the touch
And presence of my dear.

Tell him, oh sweet, sweet rose,
That I grow fixed no more, nor flourish
now
In the sweet maiden garden-ground of
old,
But severed even as thou.

Say from thy golden heart,
From virgin folded leaf and odorous
breath,
That I am his to wear or cast away,
His own in life or death.

Thy shadow, oh tardy night,
Creeps onward by valley and hill,
And scarce to my straining sight
Show the white road-reaches still.

Oh, night, stay now a little, little space,
And let me see the light of my beloved's
face !

My love is late, oh night,
And what has kept him away ?
For I know that he takes not delight
In the garish joys of day.
Haste, night, dear night, and bring my
love to me !
What if his footsteps halt and tarry but
for thee ?

Nay, what if his footsteps slide
By the swaying bridge of pine,
And whirled seaward by the tide
Is the loved form I counted mine !
Oh, night, dear night that comest yet
dost not come,
How shall I wait the hour that brings
my darling home ?

Fair star that on the shoulder of yon
hill
Peepest, a little eye of tranquil night,
Come forth. Nor sun nor moon there
is to kill
Thy ray with broader light.
Shine, star of eve that art so bright and
clear ;
Shine, little star, and bring my lover
here !

My lover ! oh, fair word for maid to
hear !
My lover who was yesterday my friend !
Oh, strange we did not know before
how near
Our stream of life smoothed to its fated
end !

Shine, star of eve, as Love's self, bright
and clear ;

Shine, little star, and bring my lover
here !

He comes ! I hear the echo of his feet.
He comes ! I fear to stay, I cannot go.
Oh, Love, that thou art shame-fast,
bitter-sweet,

Mixed with all pain, and conversant
with woe !

Shine, star of eve, more bright as night
draws near ;

Shine, little star, and bring my lover
here !

What shall I do for my love,
Who is so tender
And dear and true,
Loving and true and tender,
My strength and my defender—
What shall I do ?

I will cleave unto my love,
Who am too lowly
For him to take.
With a self-surrender holy
I will cleave unto him solely ;
I will give my being wholly
For his dear sake.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

Only a little week
Of meetings under the star,
Since the blissful evening I dared to
speak,
Sweet evening that seems so far !
And already the cruel post brings me
word

That my mother the countess, who, far
away

At a German bath with her ailing lord,
Has been dreaming the early autumn
away,

Returns to-day, and to-morrow will
come

To take the invalid leisurely home.

Ah, mother ! I fear that your pride will
scorn

That your son should mate with a lowly
bride,

Though a vicar's daughter is well
enough born

For all but a foolish pride.

And I know, moreover, your heart is
set

On her to whom no word is spoken yet,
The lofty heiress who comes to restore
Our house to the splendours of yore.

Poor mother, your patience was sadly
tried

By the studious fancies which kept me
apart

From the London which now seems to
hold your heart ;

And, alas ! I hardly know how to face
The blank amaze of your haughty gaze,
The cold surprise of patrician eyes,
As you listen to my disgrace.

Disgrace, did I say ? Ah ! where

In all the bewildering town

Is any as Gwen is, fair

Or comely, or high or pure ?

Or when did a countess's coronet crown
A head with a brighter glory of hair ?

Or how could titular rank insure

A mind and a heart so sweet ?

They shall not shame me to cheat or
beguile

My darling, my queen, my treasure,

Nor blot from my soul the pure pleasure
Of the brief hours that have been.
And if indeed I must go for a while,
It shall not be for long, but a little
while;
And then I will haste back again with
passionate feet,
To bask again in her smile.
I must tell her all to-night, sweet to-
night, when we meet.

SCENE II.

I have seen her once again,
I have seen her again, my dear.
And oh, but parting was a bitter pain !
And oh, the ready, child-like tear !
I did not know, even I, before,
With how immense and ponderous a
chain
Love binds the girlish heart, and holds
it evermore.

For I hardly know at all
How it came to be, but as we two spoke
Of parting and absence her sweet voice
broke,
And she paled and wavered as if to fall ;
And 'twas only a ready encircling arm,
And lip to lip in a close embrace,
That brought back the rose to her
troubled face,
And recalled the wandering life from
its swift alarm.
Dear young soul that Fate has given
me to hold,
And shall I forsake thee, come weal or
woe ?
No, I will not betray thy sweet trustful-
ness ; no,
Not for millions of gems and gold.

But before I left her and went
My way to the inn, while the village
street
Echoed loud with the rhythmical wheels
and feet
Of my mother's chariot, we vowed
together
That, through every change of life's
fickle weather,
We would cling to each other and never
part.
And so I, the round of festivities done,
And the pheasants killed and the county
won,
Will steal from my gilded trammels, and
come
To the Welsh hillside which is now my
home,
And the child who has my heart.

Was ever a girlish heart so fair
As Gwen's, or free from earth ?
She is pure and innocent, I swear,
As an infant at the birth.
She is full, indeed, of much old-world
lore,
From the lessons her mother taught her
of yore ;
Mozart's sweet melodies loves to re-
hearse,
And many a tome of forgotten verse ;
And something of modern letters she
knows,
And oft in fancy with Elaine goes,
As she floats down lifeless to Camelot.
But of wrong and evil she knows no
jot.
She dreams no more of the ways of
men,
Their deceits, their treacheries,

Or of coarse, bold women,—my little
 Gwen,
 With the clear, deep, trusting eyes—
 Than if you should come by some
 Arctic main,
 Where a world of ice shuts humanity
 out ;
 On some simple forgotten colony,
 Which had never heard of the world or
 wealth ;
 Or a convent set on a scarpèd hill.
 Tush ! but they would corrupt each
 other, no doubt,
 Or some echo of evil would creep in by
 stealth.
 But for Gwen the pure cold stream of
 her will
 Flows along the mountain-side, taking
 no stain,
 Crystal-clear, reflecting its kindred sky.
 Was ever a soul so fair ?

Forget me not, dear soul ! Yet where-
 fore speak
 The words of freedom, where the thing
 is not ?
 Forget me not ! And yet how poor
 and weak
 My prayer, who know that nothing is
 forgot !
 Low voice, or kindling eye, or glowing
 cheek,
 Forget them not !

 Forget me only if forgetting prove
 Oblivion of low aims and earthy
 thought ;
 Forget the blinder appetites which
 move

Through secret ways, by lower nature
 taught ;
 Forget them, love !

Remember only, with fond memory,
 The exaltation, the awakened soul,
 Swift moments strong to bind my heart
 to thee,
 Strong tides of passionate faith which
 scorn control—
 In these remember me !

Dear child so sweet in maidenhood,
 How should I doubt, regarding thee,
 A secret spring of hidden Good,
 Which rules all things and bids them
 be ?

Dear soul, so guileless and so pure,
 So innocent and free from stain,
 As 'twere untempted Eve again,
 I lean upon thee and grow sure.

I love no more the barren quest,
 The doubt I cherished I despise ;
 I am a little while at rest,
 Seeing the Godhead in thine eyes.

Can good be, yet no Giver ? Can
 The stream flow on, yet own no
 source ?

From what deep well of hidden Force
 Flows the diviner stream in man ?

I know not. Some there is, 'tis clear,
 A mystery of mysteries.

Thy youth has gazed upon it, dear,
 And bears its image in thine eyes.

Yes, God there is. Too far to know,
 It may be, yet directing all.

It is enough ; we spring, we grow,
We ripen, we decay, we fall,

To a great Will. No empty show
Of aimless and unmeaning ends
Our life is, but the overflow
Of a great Spring which always tends

To a great Deep. The silver thread
Between the Fountain and the Sea
We are for ever, quick or dead,
And Source and Ending both are He.

It is enough—no more I know ;
But maybe from thy faithful eyes,
Thy trust that knows no chill, thy glow
Of meek and daily sacrifice,

I may relearn the legend fair
I whispered at my mother's knee,
And seeing Godhead everywhere,
Confess, " And this man too was He."

SCENE III.—GWEN.

Oh, happy days so lately done,
And yet removed so far away
Before our passion-tide begun
And life's young May !
Shy early days of sun and showers,
When all the paths were hidden in
flowers

Tender and sweet,
And on the mountain-side the year,
With girlish change of smile and tear,
Tripped with light feet ;
And by the melting snows the violet
came,
And on the wolds the crocus like a
saffron flame !

Daily some song of lonely bird,
By tufted field or tasselled grove,
From the clear dawn to solemn eve
was heard,
But few of love.
Nay, rather virginal flutings pure and
clear,

Passionless preludes, ah, how dear !
Nor yet upon the nest,
The bright-eyed fearless mother sate,
Nor yet high in mid-heaven her soaring
mate

Thrilled his full breast,
Nor yet within the white domain of
song
Love burst with eyes aglow the maiden
choir among.

But when the fuller summer shone,
Soon as the perfumed rose had come,
Lo, all the reign of song was done,
The birds all dumb ;
And for the choir which did before
rejoice,
Low, tuneless accents of an anxious
voice

Weighed down with care,
And dim forebodings choking the high
note
Which once resounded from the joyous
throat
So full and fair.
I would not lose the love which is so
dear,
But 'tis oh the parted days of the im-
perfect year !

Oh, soft dove gently cooing
To thy mate upon her nest,
And hast thou known undoing
And deep unrest ?

Hath any pain of wooing
Pierced thy soft breast?

Oh, pale flower ever turning
To thy great lord the Sun,
And dost thou know a yearning
Which is never done,
For cloudless days returning
And June begun?

Ah, heart! there is no pleasure
As thine, nor grief.
Time Future holds the treasure;
Time Past, the thief.
What power brings this one, measure,
Or that, relief?

Ah! 'tis not very long
Since I was light and free,
And of all the burden of pain and
wrong
No echo reached to me;
But day by day, upon this breeze-swept
hill,
Far from the too great load of human
ill,
I lived within the sober walls of home,
Safe-set, nor heard a sound of outward
evil come.

It is not that I know,
By word or any deed,
What depths of misery lie below,
What hearts that bleed;
But, since I have felt the music of my
soul
Touched by another's mastering hand,
I seem to hear unfathomed oceans roll,
As when a child I saw the Atlantic
lash the strand.

Oh, mother, who art dead
So long beneath the grass,
Lift up once more, lift thy beloved
head
When we two pass,
And tell me—tell me if this passionate
pain,
This longing, this ineffable desire
For one I know so lately, be the gain
To which young maids aspire.
Is this to love, to kiss my chain and
feel
A dominant will to which 'tis joy to
kneel?

Oh, mother, I am a maid;
I am young, I know not men.
My great joy makes me shrink and be
afraid.
It is not now as then
When first we walked together on the
hill.
I take no longer, thought for any soul
Of those I loved before and cherish
still;
I care not for the poor, the blind, the
lame;
I care not for the organ's solemn roll,
Or sabbath hymns and prayers, who
am burnt as of a flame.

Nay, love! how can I doubt thee
Who art so dear,
Though I pine away without thee
In the fading year?
The ash flings down its leaf, the
heather
Is bloomless in the autumn weather;
The mountain paths are wet with rime,
Where we together eve by eve
Would wander in the joyous time,

Fair hours when thy returning strength
Came with the days' increasing length.
I pace alone the dear familiar road
Where first we met. I walk alone ;
I have no aim nor purpose, none—
Only to think of those soft days and
still believe.

Last evening, on a distant hill,
A wreath of cloud mist dealing sleet
Compassed my homeward steps, as still
I toiled with weary feet.
Oh, what if the snow, like a winding-
sheet,
Had stayed the steps of my life and my
troubled will,
And closed on me for ever, concluding
there
My little hopes and joys, and maybe
my despair !

Nay, I will not doubt him nor be
afraid ;
He is all that is good, I know it, tender
and true.
But I fear he is higher in rank than he
said ;

For one day, I remember it well, as he
lay

Very weak on his bed, a letter came
Coronet-blazoned, and half in shame
I lifted my eyes, and he saw I knew,
And his face grew troubled and never
more

Was his gaze as frank as it was before.
Tender it was, indeed, and ardent and
true,

But not as frank as before.

But I count the days till he comes
again ;

I long for him with a dull, deep pain.

I will do whatever thing my love
commands ;

I will go or stay ; I am taken as a bird
in his hands.

Oh, love, my love ! tarry not long ;
I am not happy nor strong.

—————

Delay not, love ; the sun has lost his
fire.

Stay not ; the cold earth loses warmth
and light.

Summer is dead, and Winter comes to
blight

The waiting world's desire.

Come back, and coming bring back
Spring with thee,

Spring for my heart though all the
world lie dead ;

My life will burst in blossom at thy
tread—

Oh, love, come back to me !

ACT III.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

Once more upon these dear familiar
hills

I tread ; 'tis autumn now, 'twas summer
then.

The valley paths are deep in mire ; the
leaf

Falls sadly from the bough ; the village
inn,

So noisy then, when four months since
I lay

'Twixt life and death, is silent ; a gray
mist

Hangs o'er the breathless lowland. All
the hills

Are clouded, on whose summits a thin
 cowl
 Of snowflakes sits at times. Summer
 is dead ;
 A sad autumnal stillness over all
 The dull world broods, and in my heart
 I know
 Summer is dead—sweet summer, ah,
 too brief !

For now, alas ! I know
 What folly 'twas that kept me here
 Three little months ago.
 I have drunk deep since then of cups
 that cheer,
 The sea of eyes, the beat of popular
 hands,
 When to his thought the high-set plat-
 form reels,
 As now the solitary speaker stands
 Poised like a swimmer on high waves,
 who feels
 The world cut off from him and knows
 To fail is ruin. I have known
 Men better since, and felt how near
 And yet far off are clown and peer ;
 And known how better than all lore,
 Better than love itself, and more,
 How satisfying and how great,
 It is to aid the ship of state,
 The labouring bark, which reeling goes
 'Mid sunken rocks, and watching foes.
 And best of all I know
 How baseless was my sweet Arcadian
 dream.
 I could not bear—I know it well—
 To live retired from the central stream
 Of life, as if in a hermit's cell.
 I long for the hurry, the passion, the
 glow

Of full life lived in the eyes of men ;
 I can bear no longer to dream in
 inglorious ease.
 A great name, the voice of the people,
 authority, these
 Are more than my simple Gwen.

Ay, and I have learnt besides,
 What I scarce suspected before,
 By what poor expedients my father has
 striven

To keep the wolf from his door—
 Bubble schemes, mine-ventures which
 came to nought,
 And some senseless bet on some
 swindling race,
 And I know not what gambling follies
 beside.

But I know that our lawyer, with long-
 drawn face,
 Came to me with secret warnings of ill,
 And hints that a prudent marriage
 alone could fill

The coffers so nearly empty, again.
 Poor father ! it was not right, for your
 dreams of gain,

And your pompous life and wasteful,
 orderless state,

To diminish a family hoard that was
 never great ;

But I know that if the blow he hinted
 should come,

And the Jew and the broker harried
 our ancient home,

It would kill you and drive my mother
 distraught.

Nay, I could not bear to see it. My
 path is clear :

I must see you once more and leave
 you, my love, my dear.

SCENE II.

I did not know it, I swear ;
 I did not dream that a young girl, fair
 and free,
 Could long care for one grave and
 studious and worn like me.
 I thought our brief passion was dead ;
 I thought I had schooled my heart to
 obey my head ;
 But when I saw her, she showed so
 fair,—
 It was just at the self-same spot where
 we used to meet,—
 That I hastened up the steep path with
 wings to my feet ;
 And she did not see me at first, but
 stood for a while
 Silent and musing and still, with a sweet
 half-smile,
 As if bent on some mingled vision of
 joy and pain,
 And I knew that our love was not
 dead, but slept and awoke again.

 But when at length she turned her
 eyes,
 With a beautiful, pitiful look of sur-
 prise,
 And a questing glance, and a shiver
 and a start,
 Oh, 'twas then that she touched my
 heart !
 And before a moment passes again we
 stand,
 With eyes on each other bent, and
 hand linked to hand ;
 And with hardly a spoken word, we
 are face to face,
 Strained together again in a close
 embrace ;

And I failed, I failed to tell her what
 should have been told,
 For the heart of a maid is higher than
 rank or gold.

But to-night I must speak and tell her
 all,
 I must tell her though the sky fall.

SCENE III.

It is over, it is done.
 She from the clear frank depths of her
 maidenly pride :
 "Dear, it is sudden indeed, but I
 thought it would come,
 For I doubt if any are happy under the
 sun.
 But you, you shall not imperil the pride
 of your home ;
 I know you a fitting mate for a loftier
 bride.
 I will love you and pray for you always.
 And now good-bye.
 Be good, my dear, to your wife. But I
 Have awoke from my dream in time,
 and will tend
 My poor, who, I fear, have missed a
 friend ;
 And my father is growing old, and will
 want me here.
 Fear not, I shall not be unhappy.
 Farewell, my dear !"

And she went with feet as swift as the
 bounding roe,
 And vanished before I knew she was
 minded to go,
 And left me alone with the dying day
 in the fading year.

I cannot leave her thus ; I must see her again,
 Though I know it is cruel to both and renewal of pain.
 But all night long have I lain awake,
 Tossing and fevered for her dear sake,
 As when she nursed me to life in her little room ;
 And once, when I dozed a moment, I seemed to hear
 Her sweet voice calling aloud in accents of fear,
 Calling my name in a voice which sank to a moan ;
 And, though I know it was dreaming fancy alone,
 I cannot leave her thus. I am harassed with fears ;
 I must see her again ; I must write.
 And lo ! through the gloom
 The slow dawn of autumn breaks in mist and in tears.

Dear, I must see you again.
 Bring with you the last sweet rose
 Which lingers still in your garden-ground,
 The last red summer rose.

Do you mind how you sent me a rose
 Along the swift streamlet's flow,
 A sweet and a blushing rose ?
 It is faded—'twas long ago.

Come, dear. A dream visited me
 In the weary vigilant night ;
 I heard your voice calling to me
 In grievous pain and affright.

I must see you. The swift wheels stay
 At the spot we have known of yore ;

Be there, ere they bear me away
 From my love for evermore.

SCENE IV.—GWEN.

The light has gone out of my life,
 Yet I will not repine.
 Nay, 'tis well to have passed betimes
 through the struggle and strife.

Shall I grieve that he comes not again,
 That my love is not mine ?
 Ah, folly ! the whole creation travails
 in pain.

I will live my own life once more ;
 I will succour the weak ;
 I will be but a little more grave than I
 was before.

I will strive to repay the deep love
 My fond father fails to speak ;
 Though the path may be lonely and drear,
 yet the heavens are above.

Ah ! my love who no longer art mine,
 Yet my love till I die,
 I will strive to be patient and strong,
 but I wither and pine.

A letter from my love,
 In the well-remembered hand,
 Once again, yet we have parted ;
 'Tis hard to understand.

A letter from my love !
 Dear letter, and what says he ?
 "I am going away for ever.
 Come once more, dear to me,

"And with you bring a rose."—
My love, I will be there;
I will bring you a red, red rosebud
Upon your heart to wear.

But you must not crush it, dear,
Or bind it to you too fast,
Or the poor flower's scent, I fear,
Will bring back to you the Past.

Wear your rose lightly, dear,
For ornament or pleasure;
But the virgin rose of a maiden's heart
Keep safe as a precious treasure.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

How weak are we and blind!
How ignorant of fate!
For I thought I was steadfast and firm,
and knew my mind,
Till I saw her at the gate;
And next day, as soon as the train rolled
on and I sat alone,
I wished that I had not written to give
her pain,
And I prayed that she might not come,
nor might I see her again.

But when the swift wheels slackened
and grew still
At the little wayside station beyond the
hill,
There alone by the platform stood my
treasure, my dear,
Very pale, with a rose in her hand; full
of maidenly fear.
And I sprang out to her, and we
whispered ardent and low,

With sad hearts throbbing together and
cheeks aglow,
For a precious minute or two, till the
signal to go;
And then, all my youth and my love
rising up like a flame,
I whispered, "I cannot leave you, my
love, my bride.

Come to me, my own, my wife!"

And lo! as in a trance,
With a shiver and tottering limbs, and
a pitiful glance,
As one who walked in a dream, she
obeyed and came
Constrained, and sank fainting down in
her place at my side.

There she lay long time on my breast,
very pale and chill,
And I trembled to see her poor white
face, my dear;
And the swift train had sped us on far,
when, with something of fear,
She said quickly, "Where am I?"
And I: "With your husband to
be.

We are long miles away from your
home. You will trust me, my
own?"

And she moaned, "Ah! how could I
leave my father alone?"

Poor father! Ah! what will they think
of me when they know?

They will deem me unmaidenly—bold.
Let me go. We were mad;

It is nothing to women to wither and
pine and be sad.

Let me go. It is better. Some weak-
ness constrained me to come.

I will go and be happy, fear not, with
my equals at home."

But I soothed her, and flashed a mes-
sage that all was well,

And to promise a letter next day, telling
 all that there was to tell ;
 And she lay like a child on my heart,
 with her head bent wearily down,
 And lo ! on the autumn twilight, the
 glare and the turmoil of town.

I hold him wrong who opens wide
 The secret, sacred doors of love,
 The paths by shame-fast footsteps tried,
 The mazes of the enchanted grove.

I hold him wrong ; but Gwen the wife
 Is dearer far than Gwen the maid.
 We walk by hidden deeps of life,
 And no man maketh us afraid.

I hold him wrong ; but who can prize
 At its full worth the love he gains,
 Till bound by mutual sacrifice,
 Till fused by mutual joys and pains ?

Too happy are the halcyon days ;
 For Time the taker, Time the thief,
 Steals ghostlike down the flowery ways,
 And makes the blessed moments brief.

I have left her oftentimes for a while,
 And then, on some pretext hastily
 found,
 Have hurried back to bask in her
 smile ;
 But now I am here fast bound,
 For my father is failing, day by day,
 And 'tis hard to keep the harpies at
 bay,
 Who would enter and drive him from
 house and home.

They must not suspect that I, who am
 alone
 The mainstay on which they depend to
 secure their own,
 Am not the lover of one who brings
 lands and wealth,
 But bound to a penniless girl whom I
 wedded by stealth ;
 They must not dream it ; and therefore
 here must I stay,
 Though I seem indeed to lose every
 day
 That keeps me away from my love.
 Dear soul, it is springtime again, and
 fresh currents move
 Through the world, and stir the life in
 blossom and tree,
 And the little hidden life which ere
 long shall be.

SCENE II.—GWEN.

Dear love, I will be patient, yet
 I long to see you, and I fear
 Lest absence lead you to forget
 The things that once were dear.

You tell me we awhile must hide
 Our union safe from prying eyes,
 But when your ailing father dies
 You will proclaim me as your bride.

I long that this might be, nor wait
 The death of any. I have been
 These last six months, 'spite love and
 fate,

Dearest, as happy as a queen.

But now another dearer life
 Forbids my careless patience more.

Pray God it may not come before
I am acknowledged as your wife.

I did not know,
When I walked careless on the hills,
The hopeless load of human ills ;
But neither could I know
To what full height our happiness can
grow.

Sing, caged bird, sing !
Is this your constant strain ?
"I would, I would that I were free ;
I would, I would, I would that I were
once again
Sitting alone within a leafy tree ;
I would that I might be
Breathing free air far from this gilded
pain."

Ah, bird ! I would be free
As you, for I weary here.
And yet, my bird, I have one so dear,
so dear,
That, if he might only bide with me,
I should no longer care
To change this stifling, fettered air
For the free mountain-breathings fresh
and fair.

Cold east and drear,
Thy chill breath veils the world in
cheerless gray.
Sad east, while thou art here,
Life creeps with halting feet its weary
way.
I feel you pierce my heart, oh, cold
east wind !
Sad east ! that leavest lifeless plains
behind.

The dull earth, watching, sleeps
Within her leafless bowers,
Until the west wind coming weeps
Soft tears that turn to flowers.
Oh, cruel east ! that dost delay the
world,
Withering the leaf of hope while yet
unfurled.

Over this gray cheerless town
The stifling smoke-mist hangs, a squalid
pall,
And night, too swift for springtide,
settles down
Before the shades of mountain-evenings
fall.
I sicken here alone, dull day by day,
To watch the turmoil wake and fade
away.

Why does my dear not come,
Or write or send some little loving
word ?
It is not here as 'twas at home.
I have no companion but this prisoned
bird ;
No friend in all the throng to hear my
sighs ;
No glance, but the cold stare of alien
eyes.

No friend, nor love nor care
To hold me ; but when summer suns
return
And wake this stagnant and exhausted
air,
The little dearer life for which I yearn
May wake, and make me happier than
of old,
Watching the innocent life my arms
enfold.

Cold east and drear,
 Spreading a noontide darkness on the
 town.
 You shall not blight my faith, nor
 make me fear,
 Nor leave me in despond, nor drag me
 down.
 I am alone ; but, if he loves me still,
 I am not all alone, sad days and chill.

SCENE III.

I grieve that my father stays away,
 Though his letters are always dear and
 kind,
 But sometimes I think they seem to
 convey
 Some shadow of pain on a doubtful
 mind ;
 But he does not know that I am alone,
 For I could not tell him my dear was
 gone,
 And it may be he has not forgiven quite
 Our foolish and hurried flight.
 What ? Do I not know—forgive, did
 I say ?—
 That nought which falls short of com-
 mitted wrong
 Would keep his heart from his child for
 long,
 Nought that a kiss would not chase
 away ?
 Dear father ! I would I might welcome
 him here !
 For, brooding here day by day,
 My mind grows full of a formless fear,
 And I dread the glance of the women ;
 the sneer
 Which I seem to see on their lips and eyes,
 As they ask sometimes with a hard
 surprise

If my husband is ailing ; he keeps
 away—
 And I have but faltering words to say.
 And to-day I thought, as I sate in my
 lonely room,
 With a little frock on my lap, in the
 gathering gloom,
 And the woman came with the lights,
 that she seemed to look
 With the old respect no more, but a
 cold rebuke.
 Does she doubt, then, I am his wife ? I
 will fly ; I will go ;
 I will tell her all my secret. Ah, no !
 ah, no !
 Great Heaven, does she think he is
 gone and will no more come ?
 Oh, Henry, 'tis cruel to leave me, come
 to me, come home !

SCENE IV.

This is the fourth dull week—
 I am wretched and sick at heart—
 Since the thought came first which I
 fear to write or speak,
 And I have no rest at night ; for I sud-
 denly start,
 Thinking I hear his voice calling to me
 in pain,
 Mixed with voices of scorn sometimes,
 through the dead city-night ;
 And then, if my tired eyes sink to
 slumber again,
 I wake in deadly fright.
 And before the bustle of life revives in
 the street,
 I watch for the hurrying sound of the
 messenger's feet,
 And I hold my breath as he comes with
 a sickening fear.

But the sharp summons passes on
quickly, and never here
He stays ; but I must not despair, nor
ever forget
That I live for a ripening life, which
'twould injure to fret.

But I know that my face is pale and
anxious and thin,
Which my love would hardly know, if
he saw me again ;
And I look in the glass, and I start to
see therein
Two hollow eyes answer my gaze with
a look of pain.

And perhaps he would love me no
more in my beauty's disgrace ;
Perhaps he was only a slave to a foolish
face ;
Perhaps—— But I know I am sick in
body and mind,
Or I could not doubt my love, who was
always kind.

My heart is heavy,
My life runs low,
My young blood's pulses
Beat faint and slow.

I cannot believe,
Yet I dare not doubt,
For when faith is shadowed
Love's fire goes out.

Oh, Love, what is this
That thy strong power brings
To those thou hast touched
With thy vanishing wings ?

Oh, Love, it was cruel
To bring us to pain.

I will hide me away
From the cold world again.

I can stay here no longer ;
Whatever may come,
I will go to my father
And—die at home.

My heart is heavy,
My life runs slow ;
To my Father in Heaven
I open my woe.

SCENE V.

What is it that has been ?
Let me once recall again
The fear that came upon me,
And the story of my pain.

Yester-eve, as I sat alone,
Somebody entered, and read
How the Earl, at some foreign bath,
Had been ailing and now was dead ;

And pointed to the place,
And the letters seemed to swim,
And the whole room whirling round
and round,
As my sight grew faint and dim.

For 'twas said that the new Earl,
His mourning done, would wed
The heiress of whom he told me before ;
And I wished that I was dead.

And they muttered, with freezing
glances,
“They had thought 'twas thus, before ;”
And I could not answer a single word
But fell upon the floor.

And now I lie ailing and weak,
Sick in body and mind and heart;
But to-morrow, if God help me,
I will rouse me and depart.

Oh, father, you will not spurn me,
Nor think me what they say,
But take us back to your heart and life,
And my grief shall fade away.

SCENE VI.

Oh, the sweet air of the hills,
That on this fair summer night
Breathes on me as I 'scape at last
From the glare of the long day,
From the dust of the long plain,
And the rushing, maddening train !

Here I mount among the pines
By the path we knew so well.
All is there unchanged but I.
Hark ! the thunder of the fall.
See the ash-grove where we sate.
There we lingered at the gate.

Nothing changed, but I am changed.
Slowly up the well-loved steep,
Failing footsteps toiling slow,
Where, upon the morning hills,
Twelve months since my feet would go
Bounding lightly as the roe.

None have seen me, that is well—
Yet if here I were to fail—
Courage ! I shall reach there—Nay,
I must rest awhile ; then climb
Slowly through the fragrant gloom,
Where my garden roses bloom.—

It is finished. Dear white head
Bending low upon thy book,

Homely lamp, familiar room,
Ye will welcome me, I know.
Open, father ; I am come
Broken-hearted to my home !

ACT V.

SCENE I.—GWEN.

It is over now.
I have been a long time ill,
But to-day I am able to wander slow
To the churchyard round the hill.
'Tis there they have laid my little love,
Who lingered three little months—it
was not long—
And there they will lay me too, ere the
waning light grows strong.

It is but a little grave
Where my little one is laid,
But I keep it decked with white flowers
every day,
And above, a kindly yew's protecting
shade
Shelters it safe from rain and wind.
Sleep fast, my darling, sleep while yet
you may ;
Your mother will not linger long behind.

Dear child, I wonder when
The last great morning breaks and we
shall wake,
If I may bear you then
Safe in my nursing arms for Him to
take ;
Or will He suffer you to come before,
White soul, while I am waiting at the
door ?

Dear little grave, I strew
Fresh autumn flowers and garden
blooms on you ;

I strew upon you roses white and red ;
I fling my heart upon you, narrow bed !

Once, twelve months since, I launched
my heart, a rose,
Where, lit with laughter, Love's sweet
river goes,
And lo ! once more the year's swift
pinions move,
And now I cast it on the grave of love.

My love, my self, my child,
Lie buried here, and I am free again.
I would I were a slave ; I loved my
chain.

I would that I might see your sweet
eyes mild ;

They were your father's eyes, who loves
not me——

I blame him not, but do forgive for
thee.

It is not long I stay, my life, my dear,
Not long until we are together here.

Last year—it seems an age ago—
I had not seen him : then we went
Together on our road ; and so,
By ways and converse innocent,
We gained at last the sacred gate
Of wedlock, and the hand of Fate
Lifted the latch, and we passed in
To the enchanted ground therein.
And now the winds of autumn rave,
And love lies dead within a grave.

Dear love, that liest there so still,
I go now till to-morrow's sun ;
The autumn evening gathers chill,
The day is well-nigh done.
Sleep, dear, through all thy long un-
troubled night,
Sleep calmly till the Light !

SCENE II.

What ? Can a second springtide burst,
As happy as the first,
From out the midst of dark autumnal
days ?

And can the dead roots start ?
And can the withered heart
Rise upward from despair to joy and
praise ?

Yes, though with thrills of almost pain,
They can, again.

For as I turned yesterday, sad and
slow,

From where my darling lies below,
Fulfilled with sad sweet thoughts of the
things that have been,

I saw my dear father's kindly face,
As he came to meet me with hurried
pace,

And a grave smile that told me the
news that he bore was good ;

But he slackened his steps when he saw
me, and calmed his mood.

And I said, "Tell me all." And he
answered, "'Tis well, my dear.

He was faithful ; I knew it, and is, for
his letter is here,"

And he drew it forth ; and I knew that
the writer was he,

And the title was that which he bears,
and 'twas meant for me.

Then my father kissed my forehead, and
left me alone,

And I sat down to read what he said
on a graveyard stone.

My love ! He too had been ill, for a
chill he caught

When the Earl lay dying abroad, well-
nigh brought him to nought ;

Growing to fevered heats and a wander-
ing brain,
Till he raved for his nurse of last year
to soothe him again ;
And when, after many days, he had
risen to find
The wife he was forced to leave, with
unquiet mind,
He found me not, but they said I had
gone to my home.
And so, with loving regards, he pro-
mised to come,
Almost ere his letter could reach me.
Oh, love ! oh, my dear !
I shall see you again, though 'tis late ;
and, meanwhile, a great fear
Rises up lest you grieve for your child
whom you never have seen.

SCENE III.

He has come, he has been ;
I have kissed him again and again.
Ah, God ! but it is hard to die,
For it was not he was to blame at all,
but I.
It was I, with my coward distrust and
unreasoning fear,
Who could not put faith in my love,
but shrank back from a sneer.
I am glad he was true throughout,
though my sentence of doom
Sounds clear as I lie alone in my own
white room.

To-day was a happy day,
When, upon my husband's breast,
I leant beside the grassy mound
Where our firstborn lies at rest.

And we mutely went again
By the dear old paths once more,
And I half forgot my sorrow
And the world was as before.

And he spoke with cheering words
Of the time when I should come
To cherish other children
In his old ancestral home.

Oh, my love as true as steel,
With your comfort kindly meant,
I would not seek to shadow
The light of your content ;

But a hundred signs assure me,
Signs indefinite yet strong,
That my fate is wholly written
And I linger not for long.

Dearest, let us cling together,
Heart to heart and eye to eye ;
Let us be together living,
And I shall not fear to die.

SCENE IV.—HENRY.

This is the last time that I tread
These unforgotten ways,
For to-morrow we follow the swallow
over the wave.
We have spent our Mays ;
Chill autumn has come and found us
bent over a grave,
The grave of our youthful love and the
hopes that are dead.

My dear, she is very pale and worn,
Save the brilliant spot that flushes on
either cheek ;

She recalls no longer the breezes and
freshness of morn
As she leans upon me, slow and weak ;
But I trust the warm summer sun and
the honeyed air,
And the daily sights and sounds of
things that are fair,
May rouse her and lighten her load of
care.
Dear child ! to think of her pining
alone,
While I lay longing for her and too
weak to write,
And afraid to disclose by a look or a
tone
The thing which discovered had wrecked
us quite !
Ah, me ! 'twas a wretched time ; and
now it is done,
My father is gone and my son, and I
only remain,
Weak in frame, with a fading wife and
a burden of pain.
Dear soul, I will do what by love and
by gold can be done ;
I will bask with you safe from chill in
the southern sun ;
And I pray that when summer returns
and the meadows grow green,
You may sit in my stately home, as
happy and proud as a queen.

But, oh ! what a fear is there
I dare not speak,
As I see the crimson deepen
On the pale wan cheek.
Nay, love, you are more lovely so,
A thousand times more fair,
Than when, twelve little months ago,
You went so free from care.
More dear you are, my love, and sweet,
A thousand times more dear,
Than when my heart forgot to beat

In the springtime of the year.
A thousand times more dear, my love,
A thousand times more dear,
For the tender pity that you move
And the anxious boding fear.

To-morrow, may it be
A new existence that we twain shall
prove
Upon the western sea,
Bound for some happier land of health
and love.

New hopes, new fears, new pains,
New joys ; our hearts are ready, and
we trust
The Omnipotent Will that reigns
Lifts not our hopes to dash them in the
dust.

We hope ; we cannot tell ;
We go together alone, forgetting all ;
For love, it shall be well,
Though life, a waning fire, may sink
and fall.

Yet, if a prayer may move
Thy dread decrees, Omnipotent Will,
Spare, spare my innocent love
To my fond gaze a little longer still.

SCENE V.—GWEN.

Here is a calm bright day,
And my husband's tender voice ;
He has climbed up from the village,
And I struggle to rejoice.

For I feel that to sorrow longer
For the little one who has fled,

My angel who rejoices
Among the blessed dead,

Were a morbid grief, displeasing
To the Lord of joy and pain.
Nay, I will not sorrow longer ;
I will strive to live again.

To the beautiful far countries
Where the soft unfailing sun
Beams cloudless through the winter,
And the flowers are never done,

He will take me, undelaying,
None beside us, only me,
By the ship that leaves to-morrow
The great city on the sea ;

Every morning growing milder,
As we southward wing our way,
Till our swift ship casts her anchor
In some blue unruffled bay.

Stately cities I have read of,
Naples, Rome in all her pride—
I shall see them, a great lady,
With my husband at my side.

I shall see them when returning
From the sacred stream of Nile,
From vast tombs of unknown rulers,
And the Sphinx's changeless smile.

I shall see them. But in springtime,
When the bitter east is done,
I shall greet these dear old mountains
Shining in the sober sun ;

I shall see my father smiling ;
I shall bend once more again
O'er my sleeper's flower-strewn cradle,
Mingling tender hope with pain.

I shall come, though, maybe sooner,
When I shall not see nor hear ;
For my love has given his promise
I shall rest beside my dear.

Farewell, oh dear, dear hills !
I do not know if I shall see you more.
Farewell ! 'tis set of sun, the night is
near.

Farewell ! Below, the mist of autumn
fills

The sleeping vale with winding vapours
frore,
And hides from sight the yellow woods
and sere.

But on the heights the day's declining
fire

Bathes all the summits in a haze of gold.
Not yet the cold mist, stealing high and
higher,

Touches the purple glow with fingers
cold ;

Not yet the ruddy light from out the
sky

Goes, nor the orange shadows fade and
die.

Here, far above the grave of dying day,
The clear night comes, and hills and
vales grow dark.

But soon the first faint star, a lucid spark,
Glimmers ; and, lo ! the ineffable array !

A myriad suns for one ! strange suns
and far,

The hidden homes where blessed spirits
are !

Oh ! night of Being, like the night of
day,

How should I fear because your shadows
fall ?

Who knows from what fresh glories thy
dark pall

For failing vision lifts the veil away?
What boundless spiritual orbits rise
Before the inward gaze of dying eyes?

Farewell, oh little grave,
Wherein I leave my buried heart awhile!
Thick yew, protect it well until I come;
Shelter it; let not winds of winter rave,
Nor sharp frosts fret nor snows, nor
floods defile.

Here is my heart, and here my waiting
home.

Farewell! farewell!

ACT VI.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

The sweet cold air of these untrodden
hills

Breathes gently. Five and twenty years
have gone

Since here my father trod, young, high
in hope,

With all the world before him; nor as yet
The slow-consuming fire of deep decay

Had sapped his youthful hope, and left
his life

To drag along its crippled journey, spent
In southern lands, wherever the chill
east

Might come not; year by year: and
last of all,

Since I have grown from boyhood,
visiting

His country never; cut off and divorced
From all the joys that make existence
sweet

To the aspiring great—the fame of
men——

The name which every morning's broad-
sheet takes

To the eyes and hearts of millions—all
the thirst

For the statesman's high career sated,
and lost

In a strange lethargy which bound him
fast

To an inglorious ease. And yet I know
A time there was when the more gene-
rous part

Allured his growing soul. For I have
found

Among his papers, time-stained notes
which tell

Of deeper studies far than I have dreamt
of;

Of high hopes and ambitions; such as
fire

Those who, as he and I, are placed by
Fate

On such high vantage that to will alone
And labour is enough, and each ap-
proach

Of honour, the Senate itself, which
opens not

To lower birth until slow-creeping age
Derides the folly, flings back early
doors

To their unbroken youth. These have
I found.

And, oh most strange of all! close
manuscripts

Of sceptical themes—my father's, his
who was,

Of all men I have known, most rapt by
faith

And very full of Godhead—doubts and
fears

And anxious questionings, changed yet
the same,

Differing in form alone from those which
now

At our own Oxford echo through old
rooms
Filled with young heated disputants,
whose minds
Seize with a frolic eagerness the doubts
Which have perplexed all time. All
these I found—
Ah, life is wonderful! We are the
sport
Of great laws swinging slowly through
an arc
Immeasurably vast. We doubt our
doubts,
We hug our faiths, and fancy we are free
Who are shut fast of Time.

What power it was
Froze fast his life I know not, but
sometimes
I think there must have come upon his
life
Some overmastering passion, some
young love
Such as the poets feign, for some young
heart,
Which held him back and clogged him.
Yet I know—
I would stake my life upon it—naught
of wrong
Came nigh him. Only hardly love it
was
That bound him to our mother—the
high dame
He spoke of seldom, mourned seldomer
still,
Whom scarcely I recall; whose clear
cold face
Looks from beneath its coronet in my
hall,
Statelier than any of our line. Poor
mother!
She left us early—me and little Gwen;
Gwen, whom men know as Lady
Gwendoline,

Our father's darling, who now comes
with me
When hither, after years of exile spent
From home and homely scenes, we turn
and leave
The turmoil of the Season and the chase
Of selfish worldlings, eager to secure
Those who are rich or fair.

I had found of late,
Mention among his letters here and
there
Of this Welsh village, where, when he
was young,
He spent a summer. So we left be-
hind
The senseless whirl, and now a week or
more
In this unclouded weather, bright and
fair,
Have wandered careless o'er these
purple hills,
Where once our father, older scarce
than I,
Roved in that far-off summer. We have
kept
Our name and rank a secret, and are
free
To come and go at pleasure, as did he,
Dear father, years ago. Ah! sweet
and strange,
The cycle of a life which turns and
turns
Round to the self-same spot, changed
yet the same;
The same but for the mystic beat of
Time;
The same but for the ineffable change
of Being,
Which in the same life, grown another,
works
Infinite depths of change.
Somehow—I know not
If aught it be but fancy—but I think

The secret of his life, if such there
 were,
 Lies hid within these hills ; and I re-
 member
 That day, when he was dying and his
 breath
 Came feebler even than wont—the un-
 ruffled sea
 Was sapphire, and the orange-groves
 behind
 Showed flecked with gold—we heard a
 far-off bell
 Call from the campanile on the hill,
 And then he roused himself: “Hark !
 ’tis the bell—
 From the dear church-tower on the hill
 above—
 They both are there—’tis a fair spot—
 the path
 Is steep from out the village, but the air
 Is balmy—’tis the well-remembered
 bell—
 They are singing now in Welsh, and
 the sound soothes
 The sleepers by the yew.”
 And now they tell me
 There is indeed a church on yonder
 hill,
 A little church half hidden by dark
 yews,
 Which looks upon the long green vale
 and scans
 The ever-winding river. So my sister,
 Who learnt in Italy the sketcher’s art,
 Has gone before, armed with all fit
 devices
 To snare the fleeting landscape. It is
 time
 To join her. I must hasten ; it may be
 (She is not strong, dear sister, but soon
 tires)
 She tires of sketching and awaits me.
 Father,

I would that you were with us, and
 might breathe
 This sweet cold air again as young as I.

 SCENE II.—GWEN.

How fair and fresh from this gray
 churchyard shows
 The rich green vale beneath. Upon
 the deep
 Lush meadows, where the black herds
 grazing seem
 Like rooks upon the grass, a silvery
 gleam,
 Now lost and now discovered, marks
 the place
 Where winds the brimming river. Here,
 thick woods
 Of oak and beech upon the sloping
 banks
 Bend to the shadowy stream which
 glides beneath.
 There, through the emerald meads,
 shallow or deep,
 It hastes or loiters, till the tall dark
 elms,
 Grouped by the distance, hide it. And
 above,
 On either hand the eternal mountains
 rise,
 Pine-clad below, upon whose upper
 heights
 The unfenced heather purples. All the
 sky
 Is flecked with soft white fleecy clouds
 which cast
 Bewildering charms of shadow ; and
 beyond,
 A shining sapphire drawn ’twixt earth
 and sky,
 Glitters the summer sea. Most beau-
 tiful

Thou art, oh motherland, which I
have known

As yet so little. Beautiful art thou
My second mother, sunny Italy,
Where the blue heaven is brighter, and
the sea

Gives back a clearer azure. But for me
There grows a tenderer charm from
these green fields

And purple hills and white-flecked
skies, denied

To thy more brilliant landscape. Per-
haps it is

In part because my father loved them
well,

Dear father whom I loved, and who
loved me

Closer than might a mother.

Well! enough!

I will draw no more to-day, but let the
scene

Sink on my soul, and fix itself, and
breed

Fresh scenes of beauty to inspire my
hand

When the short days are dull, and all
the sky

A gloomy pall, and gusts of wintry
rain

Beat on the darkling city.

I will muse

A little till my brother comes, and
think

How good he was whose memory
brings us here;

How careless of himself, how prompt
to give

Whatever good a father's hand can
give

To his motherless girl. I scarcely had
a thought

He did not share, and as I think,
indeed,

He kept no secret from his earliest years
Of which I knew not. He has told me
all—

His studious youth, his feeble health,
the doubt

Of God and man which for a while
obscured

His noble brain and left it impotent—
And somehow it was here, upon these
hills,

From out this very spot, it may be,
gazing

On all the loveliness of earth and sky
And silver sea, the waters of his soul
Were loosèd, and flowed onward strong
and clear,

To join the Infinite Deep!

There comes a cloud

Upon the sky and gusts of sudden
wind;

The beauty fades, as treacherous as
youth,

And fleeting, and I thought I heard a
roll

Of thunder drawing near. I would my
brother

Were come. I am afraid. The church
is closed—

It is not here as 'tis in Italy,

Where all who choose may kneel as
welcome guests

Within God's House; but yon thick
yew that stands

Above that gleaming cross will shelter
me

From heavier storms than this.

Here I am safe.

See with what tender care some loving
hand

Keeps green the sward, and sets it round
with flowers

That bloom as in a garden! One red
rose

Twines round the cross, and sheds in
this rude wind
Its crimson petals. Two graves stretch
beneath,
And three sleep under. Ah! 'tis the
old vicar's
Who lived here forty years and died
last year.

"ALSO"—ah, see my brother comes at
last—

"ALSO OF"—strange, almost my name
—GWENLLIAN,

HIS DAUGHTER, WHO DIED AGED
TWENTY YEARS"—

The year?—one year before my father's
marriage—

Ah me! these two were parted long,
long years!

"COUNTESS OF"—What is this? My
father's title!

Father, what means it?—"AND HER
INFANT SON

HENRY, LORD"—What, my brother's?
What is this?

It is strange. Quick! I am faint-
ing . . .

Henry! Henry!

EPILOGUE.

The silent Forces of the World,
Time, Change, and Fate, deride us
still;

Nor ever from the hidden summit,
furled,

Where sits the Eternal Will,
The clouds of Pain and Error rise
Before our straining eyes.

It is to-day as 'twas before,
From the far days when Man began to
speak,

Ere Moses preached or Homer sung,
Ere Buddha's musing thought or Plato's
silvery tongue.

We pace our destined path with failing
footsteps weak;

A little more we see, a little more
Of that great orb which shineth day and
night

Through the high heaven, now hidden,
now too bright,

The Sun to which the earth on which
we are,

Life's labouring world, is as the feeblest
star.

Nor this firm globe we know

Which lies beneath our feet;

Nor by what grades we have grown and
yet shall grow,

Through chains of miracle, more and
more complete;

By what decrees the watery earth

Compacted grew the womb of countless
birth;

Nor, when the failing breath

Is taken by the frozen lips of Death,

Whither the Spoiler, fleeing with his
prey,

The fluttering, wandering Wonder bears
away.

The powers of Pain and Wrong,

Immeasurably strong,

Assail our souls, and chill with common
doubt

Clear brain and heart devout:

War, Pestilence, and Famine, as of old,
The lust of the flesh, the baser lust of
gold,

Vex us and harm us still;

Fire comes, and crash and wreck, and
lives are shed

As if the Eternal Will itself were dead;

And sometimes Wrong and Right, the
 thing we fear,
 The thing we cherish, draw confusedly
 near ;
 We know not which to choose, we
 cannot separate
 Our longing and our hate.

But Love the Conqueror, Love, Im-
 mortal Love,
 Through the high heaven doth move,
 Spurning the brute earth with his purple
 wings,
 And from the great Sun brings
 Some radiant beam to light the House
 of Life,
 Uplifts our grosser thought, and makes
 us pure ;
 And to a Higher Purpose doth mature

Our trivial days, and calms the ignoble
 strife,
 Raises the waning life with his sweet
 breath,
 And from the arms of Death
 Soars with it to the eternal shore,
 Where sight or thought of evil comes no
 more.

Love sitteth now above,
 Enthroned in glory,
 And yet hath deigned to move
 Through life's sad story.
 Fair Name, we are only thine !
 Thou only art divine !
 Be with us to the end, for there is
 none
 But thou to bind together God and
 Man in one !

THE ODE OF LIFE

THE ODE OF CREATION.

A DARK and boundless deep,
 And a blind height above,
 Untrodden fields of sleep,
 Wherein no force may move,
 Where every sound is still,
 Nor breathes a living breath ;—
 These are the heights, these are the
 depths, these are the voids of
 Death.

But slowly on the lifeless plain
 There wakes a far-sent ray, a little star,
 A tiny spark of Being from afar,
 A throb of precious pain.

It is done, it has been, it has risen, the
 glimmer of Life,
 The dark void withdrawing around,
 It breaks with a whisper of sound,
 Through the wastes of silence and sleep,
 There is no more stillness nor Death,
 The great Universe wakes with a deep-
 drawn singultient breath.
 The great orbs cohere and spin on their
 measureless ways—
 —The great suns awaken and shine,
 ringed with girdles of fire every
 one—
 All the worlds are on fire and ablaze—
 The flaming globes circle and whirl
 each one round its sun

—The hot seas seethe and bellow—
the fixed hills glow—
And the blast of Creation burns fierce
while the centuries grow ;
And Life and Time have begun !

Myriads on myriads of years !
Or was there indeed no time except
in the Infinite Mind ?
And was there indeed no ceaseless
circling of spheres ?
Since no sentient eye might mark the
peripheries wind,
And at length the great Life of the
worlds grown concentrate would
thrill

Through some lowly speck of matter,
which, waxing apart,
Grew conscious by slow degrees, and
blossomed in Will ;
Weak centres of Force, which floated
as motes in a beam,
Automatic, contracting, expanding, but
consciousless yet.

Till a stronger force working within
them would raise them once more,
Pushing with inchoate fin as if with an
oar

Afloat on the slow warm stream ;
And another Creation has come and a
new-begun strife,
With this primal glimmer of life.

Myriads on myriads of years ! if Time
there were yet,
When no soul was by to remember or
to forget ;
The fin growing stronger, and changing
to wing or to claw,
Struggle on struggle, sentience, con-
sciousness, ravin, and pain,
Monstrous and mailed forms in the
ooze, or hurtling thro' air,

Waging through æons of time the in-
effable struggles which gain
Order thro' waste and thro' wear.
Till the mastodon stalks forth in might
with hoof and with jaw,
And the law of the Higher prevails, the
Ultimate Law,

And the cooler earth teems with life, on
land and in sea :

Life organic in beast, fish, or bird, in
herb or in tree,

Life dominant, life exulting with quick-
coming breath,

Life that fades down and sinks in the
silence and slumber of Death.

But no soul to mark the struggle nor
thought which might turn

To whence those weird fires burn.

Successions, progressions, a scheme of
insensible life,

One Will alone directing the infinite
strife,

One Force, one Eye, one Sole and
Regarding Mind,

In a Universe deaf and blind !

And was it some Inner Law,
Some hidden potency of Force,
Or some creative breath Divine,
Which sped the creature on its upward
course ?

Until at last it woke and saw,
With visual forces fine,

The Godhead that was round it every-
where,

The spiritual essence fair,

Which doth innerve this outward show
of things—

And filled the brute with high imagin-
ings,

And winging it with new-found wings

Lifted its aspect to the infinite sky,

Where, in the Light of the Creative Eye

Its ancient slough away it cast,
And rose to Man at last !

How know we or can trace
The first beginnings of all Time,
Who know not yet indeed how this our
race

Rises to heights sublime?
In darkness does our life begin,
Hidden and fenced within.
In darkness and obscurity
Dwell the blind germs which yet shall
be.

In darkness the slow rolling months
fulfil

The pre-ordained will.
And even in childhood's earliest days,
No memory-haunted ways
Take our first footsteps ; but in deep
And unremembered tracts of sleep
The immature creature dwells, nor can
recall

Its former self or primal state at all.

THE ODE OF INFANCY.

OH, little child !

Stretched on thy mother's knees, with
steadfast gaze

And innocent aspect mild,
Viewing this novel scene in mute amaze,
Following the moving light, thy
mother's smile,

And storing up the while
New precious knowledge till thou
com'st to be

Sage it may be or clown—
Soaring or sinking down,
To topmost heights of weal or depths of
misery ;

How shall I dare to mark thy innocent
look,

And write as in a book
Thy infinite possibilities of life ;
What fate awaits thee in the coming
strife,
What joys, what triumphs in the grow-
ing years,
What depths of woe and tears ?

I see thee lie
Safe in thy silken cradle, sunk in down,
Within thy father's palace-chambers
fair ;

Thy guarded slumbers breathing tem-
pered air ;

The soft eyes, full of yearning, watch-
ing by ;

Caressing arms waiting thy waking cry ;
All luxury and state which can assuage
Life's painful heritage ;

The prayers of a people swell for thee
Up to the careless skies which cover all.
And yet it may be thine to fall

Far from thy loved and native land,
And end thy imperfect, innocent life-
tale here,

Forsaken on a savage desert strand,
Pierced through and through by some
barbarian spear.

I see thy tiny face
Pale, worn with hunger, and large
hollow eyes,

Upon the frozen way-side laid
Stiffening in thy dead mother's cold
embrace.

I hear thy piteous cries
When the sot flings thee down with
limbs that bleed—

Flings thee, and takes no heed ;
Weak, helpless, born to misery, girt
round

With vice and sin and shame, in sight
and sound.

Poor life foredoomed, already sunk and
lost ;

Too often sent to tread the ways of
death

With childish failing breath ;

Yet oftentimes holding power

To bloom a virgin flower

Upon the untrodden heights closed to
the multitude,

Among the wise and good.

Or with brown face thou comest and
limb,

Naked, on the warm soil that bears the
palm ;

Or haply the young heir of all the dim

And half-forgotten realms whose ruins
stand

Sown lion-haunted on the deathlike calm

Which wraps the Egyptian or Assyrian
sand,

Reared 'midst the dust of empires ; or
art now

As through all history thou wert, the
child

Of savage parents, rude and wild,

Springing and falling ; born to flower
and seed,

Or sink upon the uncaring earth, a weed

Trodden by the pitiless feet of cruel men

With hearts that ape the tiger's ; or art
born

In the old, old empire, which hath long
outworn

God and the hopes of man, and yet
coheres,

Propped by its own far-reaching bulk,
as when

It did emerge from savagery and grew,

Oh, child ! as yet may you,

To worldly strength, and knowledge,
and dead lore

Of wisdom fled before,

And dull content, and soulless hopes
and fears.

Wherever thou mayest be,

To me thou art wonderful and strange
to see—

Busied with trifles, rapt with simple toys,

As men with graver joys.

I hear thy lisping accents slowly reach

The miracle of speech ;

I mark thy innocent smile ;

I treasure up each baby wile

Which smooths the brow of thought,
the front of care.

Thou royal scion, born to be the heir

Of all the unrecorded days, since first

Man rose to his full being, once blest,
and then accurst !

In weal and woe and ill

Thou art a miracle still.

From snow-bound hut to equatorial
strand,

Above thee still regarding angels stand ;

While thy brief life-tale fleeteth like a
dream

Across Creation's glass.

Dark powers of ill press thee on either
side,

As now thy swift years pass,

Revealing on the young soul's tablets
white

The eternal characters of Right ;

Or sometimes with the growing years
grown strong

The unhallowed signs of wrong.

Oh, little child ! thou bringest with
thee still,

As Moses, parting from the fiery hill,

Some dim reflection in thine eyes,

Some sense of Godhead, some indefinite
wonder

As of one drifted here unwillingly ;
 Who knows no speech of ours, and yet
 doth keep
 Some dumb remembrance of a gracious
 home
 Which lights his waking hours and fills
 his sleep
 With precious visions which unbidden
 come ;
 Some golden link which nought of earth
 can sunder,
 Some glimpse of a more glorious land
 and sea !

Oh, precious vision fleeting past !
 Oh, age too fair to last !
 For soon new gifts and powers are
 thine,
 And growing springs and summers
 bring
 Boyhood or girlhood hastening,
 And nerve the agile limb, and teach,
 With the new gift of speech,
 The wonders that stand round on every
 side,
 And Life's imperial portals opening
 gradually wide.

THE ODE OF CHILDHOOD.

I. BOYHOOD.

FAIR budding age,
 Which next upon life's stage
 Passest a fairy dream before the eyes,
 High health and bounding limb,
 Eager and stretching towards the
 wished-for prize ;
 Whate'er the passing care that takes
 thy thought,
 I catch the sweet brisk scent of trodden
 grass
 When through the golden afternoon

Of a long day in June,
 Until the twilight dim,
 The playfield echoes with the joyous
 noise
 Of troops of agile boys,
 Who, bare-armed, throw the rapid-
 bounding ball ;
 Who shout and race and fall.
 I see the warm pool fringed with
 meadow-sweet,
 Where stream in summer, with eager
 feet
 Through gold of buttercups and crested
 grass
 The gay processions stripping as they
 pass.
 I hear the cool and glassy depths
 divide
 As the bold fair young bodies, far more
 fair
 Than ever sculptured Nereids were,
 Plunge fearless down, or push, with
 front or side,
 Through the caressing wave.
 I mark the deadly chill, thro' the young
 blood,
 When some young life, snatched from
 the cruel flood,
 Looks once upon the flowers, the fields,
 the sun,—
 Looks once, and then is done !
 Or the grey, frosty field, and the great
 ball
 Urged on by flying feet.
 Or when the skate rings on the frozen
 lake,
 The gliding phantoms fleet,
 Rosy with health, and laughing though
 they fall.
 Or by the rapid stream or swirling
 pool,
 The fisher, with his pliant wand.
 Or by the covert-side, taking his stand,

The shooter, watching patient hour by
 hour,
 With that hard youthful heart that
 young breasts hold,
 Till the fur glances through the brake ;
 As when our savage sires wandered of
 old,
 Hungering through primal wastes. I
 see them all,
 The brisk, swift days of youth, which
 cares for nought
 But for the joy of living ; scarce a
 thought
 Of Love, or Knowledge, or at best
 Such labour as gives zest
 To the great joy of living. Oh, blest
 time !
 For which each passing hour rings out
 a chime
 Of joy-bells all the year ; ay, tho'
 through days
 Of ill thou farest, and unhappy ways ;
 Or whether on the sun-struck lands
 thy feet
 Are the young savage hunter's, lithe
 and fleet,
 Turning at night-fall to thy father's
 cot,
 Bathed in the full white moonlight ; or
 dost stand
 'Mid the hushed plains of some for-
 saken land ;—
 Where'er thou art, oh, boyhood ! thou
 art free
 And fresh as the young breeze in summer
 born
 On sun-kissed hills or on the laughing
 sea,
 Or gay bird-music breathing of the
 morn,
 Or some sweet rose-bud pearled with
 early dew,
 As brief and fair as you

II. GIRLHOOD.

Or in another channel still more sweet,
 Life's current flows along,
 Ere yet the tide of passion, full and
 strong,
 Hurries the maiden's feet.
 Oh, sweet and early girlish years
 Of innocent hopes and fears !
 Busied with fancies bright and gay,
 Which Love shall chase away,
 When, with the flutter of celestial
 wings,
 He stirs the soul forth from its depths,
 and brings
 Healing from trouble. Oh, deep well
 Of fairy fancies undefiled !
 Oh, sweet and innocent child !

 Now with thy doll I see thee full of care,
 Or filled already with the mother's air,
 Hushing thy child to sleep.
 And now thyself immersed in slumbers,
 deep
 Yet light, I see thee lie.
 And now the singer, lifting a clear
 voice
 In soaring hymns or carols that rejoice,
 Or busied with thy seam, or doubly fair
 For the unconscious rapture of thy look
 Lost in some simple book.
 Whate'er the colour of thy face,
 Thou art fulfilled with grace.
 Oh, little maiden, fair or brown !
 Thine is the simple beauty which doth
 crown
 The dreams of happy fathers, who have
 past
 By Love and Passion, and have come
 To know pure joys of home ;
 And for the hurry and haste of younger
 years,
 Have taken the hearth that cheers,

And the fair realm of duty, and delight
Of innocent faces bright
And the sweet wells of deep untroubled
love
A daughter's name can move.

In every clime and age I see thee
still,
Since the rude nomads wandered forth
at will
Upon the unbounded Aryan pastures
wild—

There thou wert, oh, fair child !
“The milker” ’twas they called thee ;
all day long
Tending the browsing herds with high-
voiced song ;
Or on some sun-warmed place
Upon the flower-faced grass,
Watching the old clouds pass,
And weaving wreaths with such wild
grace
And sprightly girlish glee
As Proserpine did once in sunny Sicily.

Or maybe by some widowed hearth—
The fairest, saddest sight on earth,
Filled too soon with sweet care,
And bringing back the voice and air
Of thy dead mother ; thou art set
An innocent virgin-mother, childlike
yet.

Thy baby sisters on thy loving arm
Sleep fast, secure from harm.
Thou hast no time for game or toy,
Or other thought but this ;
Finding thy full reward, thy chiefest joy,
In thy fond father's kiss.

Or under palms to-day,
Thy childhood fleets away ;
Or by the broadening shadow hid,
Of tomb or pyramid ;

In stainless whiteness : or maybe
Forlorn in haunts of misery ;
Thou keepest on thy rounded face
Some unforgotten trace
Of the old primal days unsung,
Of the fresh breezes of pure morn
When the first maiden child was born,
And Time was young.

Fair streams which run as yet
Each in its separate channel from the
snows ;
Boyhood and girlhood ; while Life's
banks are set
With blooms that kiss the clear lymph
as it flows,
One swift and strong and deep,
One where the lilies sleep ;—
Fair streams, which soon some stress
of Life and Time
Shall bring together,
Under new magical skies and the
strange weather
Of an enchanted clime.

THE ODE OF YOUTH.

Now upon the tree of life there rise
Before our wondering eyes
Two strange new flowers of varied hue.
The tree is grown,
The flowers are blown,
There is nought wanting to its early
sweetness ;
But with a fair completeness,
The purple bloom and white
Fill the entranced, admiring sight.
The tree is grown, the tree is strong ;
Oh ! dear to art and song !

Fair time of Flowers ! within whose
 chalice sweet
 Lurks Youth with rosy feet,
 And Love with purple folded wing,
 And birdlike thoughts that sing.

I.—EARLY MANHOOD.

And first, oh youth, I see thee with the
 plume
 Of thy thick locks upon thy forehead
 set,
 And thy frank eyes kindling with fire,
 or dim
 With soaring thoughts of heaven, or wet
 With kindly dews of pity ; the straight
 limb
 And the strong arm, and force that
 never tires ;
 The cheek and lip touched with the
 early down
 Of manhood's fullest crown ;
 The heart, which hardly thought of
 passion fires ;
 The mind, which opens like a flower in
 spring
 To all the wanton airs the seasons
 bring ;—
 The young existence self-contained no
 longer,
 But pressing outward hour by hour,
 Fired with a thirst continually stronger,
 For some supreme white flower.
 Whatever be the prize—
 Whether upon the difficult heights of
 Thought,
 Or 'midst the white laborious dust of
 Duty,
 Or on the peaks of Power, the bloom
 be sought,
 Or in the flush and thrill of the new
 Beauty
 Born of a maiden's eyes.

Oh, happiest age of all
 When hope is without measure
 And life a thrill of pleasure,
 And health is high and force unspent,
 Nor Disappointment yet, nor sordid
 Care,
 Nor yet Satiety, nor the cold chill
 Which creeps upon the world-worn
 heart to kill
 All higher hope, and leaves us to
 despair ;
 Nor doubt of God or men can touch,
 but all
 The garden ground of Life is opened
 wide ;
 And lo ! on every side
 The flowers of spring are blooming, and
 the air
 Is scented, and sweet song is every-
 where,
 And young eyes read from an en-
 charmed book,
 With rapt entranced look,
 Loves legend and the Dream of days to
 be,
 And fables fair of Life's mythology,
 Through the still hours till dewy
 twilight fall.

Whatever be the page—
 Whether of metaphysical riddles faint,
 Or the rapt visions of some ancient seer,
 The burning thoughts of saint,
 Or maxims of the sage—
 Thou comest, oh youth, with thought
 as sure,
 With mind severe and pure ;
 Thou takest afresh, with each return-
 ing year,
 The fair thin dreams, the philosophic
 lore
 Of the great names of yore—

Plato the wise, Confucius, Socrates,
The blessed Gautama—all are thine ;
Upon thee year by year the words
divine

Of our great Master, falling like the
dew,

Sway thee, to hate the wrong, to love
the true ;

For thee the fair poetic page is spread
Of the great living and the greater
dead ;

For thee the glorious gains of Science lie
Stretched open to thine eye ;

And to thy fresh and undimmed brain,
The mysteries of Number and of Space
Seem easy to explain ;

Thou lookest with clear gaze upon the
long

Confusions of the Race, the paradox of
Wrong ;

And dost not fear to trace,
With youth's strong fiery faith that
knows no chill,

The secret of Transgression, the prime
source

Of Good and Evil, and the unfailing
course

Of the Ineffable Will.

And sometimes life, glowing with too
fierce fire,

O'er sea and land in rapid chase,
Snatches thee with tumultuous will,
And careless, breathless paces.

Sometimes a darker thought
Comes on thee as a shadow of night,
Marring thy young life's white,
And some new longing in the past
untaught,

And at thy side shamefast Desire
Stands unreprieved and guides thy bash-
ful feet

To where, girt by dim depths of solitude,

Sits Fancy, disarrayed, in a deep wood ;
And ah, but Youth runs swift and
Pleasure is sweet !

And sometimes, too, looking with too
bold eye

Upon the unclouded sky,
Sudden the heavens are hidden, and
the great Sun

Sinks as if day were done,
And the brain reels and all the life
grows faint,

Smitten by too much light ; or a thick
haze

Born out of sense doth overcloud
The soul, and leaves it blind and in
amaze,

And the young heart is dull and the
young brain

Dark till God shine again.

Oh, fairest age of all !

Whate'er thy race or clime,
To-day ten thousand cities on thee call,
Broad plain and palm-fringed isle.

Thine is the swelling life, the eager
glance and smile,

Oh, precious fruit of Life and Time !

Oh, worker of the world ! to whose
young arm

The brute earth yields and wrong, as
to a charm ;

Young seaman, soldier, student, toiler
at the plough,

Or loom, or forge, or mine, a kingly
growth art thou !

Where'er thou art, though earthy oft
and coarse,

Thou bearest with thee hidden springs
of force,

Creative power, the flower, the fruitful
strife,

The germ, the potency of Life,

Which draws all things to thee unwittingly.

The Future lies within thy loins, and
all the Days to be

To thee Time giveth to beget,

The Thought that shall redeem and
lift Man higher yet.

II. MAIDENHOOD.

But lo ! another form appears
Upon Life's glass. Oh, pure and
white !

Oh, delicate and bright !

Oh, primal growth of Time !

Sweet maidenhood ! that to a silvery
chime

Of music, and chaste fancies undefiled,

And modest grace and mild,

Comest, best gift of God to men,

As fair to-day as when

The first man, waking from his deep

And fancy-haunted sleep,

Found his strength spent, and at his
side

His fair dream glorified ;

High-soaring note, leading harmonious
song

Through secular discords long.

Oh, lily of Life's garden ! fair of hue

And sweet of scent, watered with
heaven's own dew ;

Fair being, holding hidden motherhood
And undeveloped good ;

Implicit in thee, even as white blooms
hold

Their fragrant globes of gold,

Men know no praise they can withhold
from thee,

Oh, sweet virginity !

Since Artemis first trod the youngling
earth.

Thou glorious and surpassing birth !

The Vestal fires were thine, the convents
cold

Are thine as those of old.

To thee, when strong sweet flowers of
Life and Sense,

Scent gross, we turn, oh white and
gracious innocence !

Yea, still, while life flows fast and free,
To thee we turn a world-worn eye.

Throbbing delights are youth's and
pulses high ;

Yet these at last will ebb, and then
to thee

We turn, oh fair pale lily, clothed with
purity !

For sure it is indeed

Two streams through Life's ground flow,
and both are good—

The one whose goal is gracious mother-
hood ;

The other in the cloister pale and dim

Finding sufficient meed

In pure observance, rite, and soaring
hymn.

We may not blame nor hold them wrong
Who through their lives their liturgies

prolong,

Even though the prize of motherhood
be great.

But always thine, oh, blest estate !

Thine it is, under youth's hot sun, to
keep

Celestial snows and pure abysses deep.

I see thy fair expanding mind,

A precious blossom parcel-blown,

Not with the young man's noble rage,

But with a gentler radiance all thy own,

Fixed now on history's fabled page,

Now on the bard's diviner thought,

And now by some deep music stirred,

Deeper than any spoken word,
Or sweet love-story soft as southern
wind.

Dear flower and fair to mortal eye,
Whatever be thy age, thy clime, thy race,
Whether the gentle curve of thy young
breast

Be hidden in white lawn or stand confest
In innocent brown nakedness and grace,
Thou art the high and unattained prize
Of all the generations that have been ;
Upon Life's throne thou sittest as a
Queen,

And at thy gracious feet
The ages kneel to thy eternal Truth.
Thy pure and spotless innocence,
And free from stain of Time and Sense,
Thy undefiled youth.

White flower of Life's tree,
Love like a wanton bee,
Shall fly to thee, and from thy deep
cold cells

Rifle the honey. Tranquil stream,
That from the chill heart of the un-
trodden snow,

So calm and clear dost flow ;
Spring wakes beneath the gleam
Of a new sun which swells
A warm and rapid torrent strong,
Soon in the sunny balmy weather,
To break its banks and bear together
Your mingled streams along.

THE ODE OF LOVE.

I AM afraid
To sing thee, oh Immortal Love, who
know
By what majestic voices long ago
Thy eulogy was said.

I do not dare
To bring a voice which thou didst never
train,
To the high-soaring difficult air
Of thy celestial strain.
Yet how of Life to sing, and yet not
tell of Love ;
And since thou art the source of song,
And all our hearts dost move,
I will essay thy praise nor fear to do
thee wrong.

For see, the lovers go
With lingering steps and slow,
By dim arcades where sunbeams scarcely
reach ;
On sea-struck northern beach ;
Or breathless tropic strand,
By evening breezes fanned ;
Or through the thick life-laden air
Of some great city ; or through the
hush
Of summer twilights 'midst the corn ;
When all the dying heavens glow and
blush
Or the young moonlight curves its
crescent horn.

Oh, wondrous bond that binds
In one sweet concord separate minds,
And from their union gives
To the rapt gazer's eye
A finer essence and more high,
A young and wingèd God, who lives
In purer air and seeks a loftier sky !
If growing cares and lower aims should
banish
All thought of heavenly hopes and
higher things,
While we can mount upon thy soaring
wings
They shall not wholly vanish.

Thou art the immortal part of man, the
soul,

Which, scorning earth's control,
Lifts us from selfish thought and grovel-
ling gains.

Thou always, whilst thy power remains,
Canst pierce the dull dead weight of
cloud,

By which our thought is bowed,
And raise our clear and cleansed eyes
To the eternal skies.

No sting of sense it is
That gives thee wings and lifts thee up
to heaven.

Too high art thou for this ;
Ethereal, pure, free from earth's grosser
leaven.

If ought of sense be thine, 'tis but the air,
Whose weight can lift thee up to soar,
Which can thy heavenward pinions bear
From brute earth more and more
Up to the fount of Power and Love
Whence all things move.

And see, the lovers go
With lingering steps and slow,
Over all the world together, all in all,
Over all the world ! Great empires fall ;
The onward march of Man seems spent ;
The nations rot in dull content ;
The blight of war, a bitter flood,
From continent to continent,
Surges in waves of blood ;
The light of knowledge sinks, the fire
of thought burns low ;

There seems scant thought of God ; but
yet

One power there is men ne'er forget,
And still through every land beneath
the skies,

Rapt, careless, looking in each other's
eyes,

With lingering steps and slow,
The lovers go.

A pillar of light
Goes evermore before their dazzled eyes.
Purple and golden-bright,
Youth's vast horizons spread and the
unbounded skies.

Oh blessed dream which for awhile dost
hide

The sorrows of the world and leave life
glorified.

Oh blessed light that risest still,
Young eyes and souls to fill !

Linked arms and hearts aglow ;
Wherever man is more than brute,
To this self-sacrifice our natures grow.
Rapt each in each they go, and mute,
Listening to the sweet song
Which Love, with mystic accents, all
day long

Sings to them, like a hidden bird,
Sweeter than e'er was seen or heard,
Which from life's thick-leaved tree
Sings sadly, merrily,

A strange, mixed song, a changeful
strain,

Which rises now to joy and jollity,
Now seemeth to complain ;
But with a sweeter music far than is
Of earthborn melodies.

He sees within her eyes
That which his nature needs to be com-
plete—

The grace, the pureness, the diviner sweet,
Which to rude souls and strong our Life
denies ;

The vision of his nightly dream ;
More pure than e'er did seem
The Nymphs of old, by wood, or hill,
or stream.

She views in him the strong
Deep note which adds the fulness to
life's song ;

High aims and thoughts that glow
She does not dream, she cannot know
What turbid forces rude and wild
Sully his youth's tumultuous flow ;
She, full of virgin fancies, pale and mild.

They draw to each other, they flow to
the deep as one,
Together thro' all lands beneath the sun,
In twin attempered streams, set side by
side,

So near that scarce a footpace may divide
Their separate depths, and this maybe
is best ;

Or maybe in each other lost,
In calm or tempest-tost,
One broad full river they roll on to the
sea,

One full accordant harmony,
High song and deep, one perfect note ;
Or maybe troublous as the wintry wave,
Or some hoarse accent of a tuneless
throat,

They know no longer peace or rest,
Ill-mated, hapless, self-opprest,
Till silent in the grave.

Yet draw together, draw together still,
Fair souls and free, fair souls and young !
Still shall thy praise, Immortal Love,
be sung !

Thou art the Spirit which doth animate ;
The Universal Will,
Which speeds the Race upon the ways
of Fate ;

Which speeds it onwards, gaining
strength

Little by little, line on line,
Till, as our hope is, risen at length

To plenitude Divine,
It comes to what high issue rare
The Future shall prepare.

THE ODE OF PERFECT YEARS.

Now flower and perfect fruit
Together dress the tree,
High midsummer has come, midsum-
mer mute

Of song, but rich to scent and sight.
The sun is high in heaven, the skies
are bright

And full of blessedness,
High hope and wild endeavour
Have fled or sunk for ever ;
Only the swifter seasons onward press,
And every day that goes
Is a full-scented, full-blown garden rose,
Orbèd, complete.

And every hour brings its own burden
sweet

Of daily duty, precious care ;
Wherefrom the visible landscape calm
and-clear

Shows finer far, and the high heaven
more near,

Than ever morning skies of sunrise
were.

I miss the unbounded hope of old,
The freshness and the glow of youth ;

I miss the fever and the fret,
The luminous haze of gold.

I see a mind clearer and calmer yet,
A more unselfish love, a more unclouded
truth ;

Such gain I take, and this
More gracious shows and fair than that
I miss.

I. FATHERHOOD.

Oh, father ! sitting at thy hearth,
With sunny heads around and lisping
talk,

For whom the world without and all
the earth

Is nought to this ; and to the strong
deep love

Which, mixed with pity, all thy soul
doth move.

Strong worker, watching o'er the tot-
tering walk

And feeble limbs and growing thought
and brain,

Rejoicing in each new-found gain

As the first sire, alone in Paradise ;

And patient and content to work all
day,

If with the eve returning from thy toil
Thou canst put off the sad world's stain
and soil,

And bending downward to thy chil-
dren's eyes,

Rise cleansed and pure as they.

I know not if life holds a more divine

Or fairer lot than thine.

Strong, patient worker, king of those
who can

To its high goal of Things to be,

Its goal of Fate and Mystery,

Lead forth the race of Man !

Thy way is ofttimes hard,

And toilsome oft thy feet ;

Thine are the days of anxious care,

When the spent brain reels, or the
strong arm tires ;

Yet all the ease and charm of days that
were,

And Pleasure paling all her fading fires,
Allure no more, but the tired hunter
now,

Or now the worker with the furrowed
brow

On frozen wastes or sun-struck thou
dost show ;

By mart, or loom, or mine, or bending
down

Chained to thy desk within the stifling
town,

Thou toilest daily that thy brood may
live.

Cares are thine, cares, and the unselfish
mind

Which spends itself for others and can
find

How blest it is without return to give.

Whate'er thy race or speech, thou art
the same ;

Before thy eyes Duty, a constant flame,
Shines always steadfast with unchang-
ing light,

Through dark days and through bright.

Sometimes, by too great misery bowed
down,

Or poison-draughts brought lower than
the beast,

Thou comest to hate the hollow eyes
around,

Dreading thy cares increased,

And dost despise thy own,

And canst thy dead heart steel against
their cries,

And mark unmoved the hunger in their
eyes ;

Or sometimes, filled with love, art
powerless to aid.

Oh, misery, to make our souls afraid !

Or if a happier lot

Await thee, yet by precious wells of
tears

Thy life's road goes, vain hopes and
anxious fears.

Thine 'tis, perchance, to mark the
 grassy mound
 Which keeps, within the churchyard's
 narrow ground,
 Thy darling who is not.
 Hopes sunk in tears, tears that ascend
 to hope ;
 Such is thy horoscope,
 Oh father, standing by the little grave,
 And impotent to save !

Thy heart is moved with pity
 For thy young growing lives, who needs
 must come
 To leave the safe and sacred walls of
 home ;
 For whose young souls, Life, like a
 cruel city,
 Spreads out her nets of sin.
 Thou knowest well of old
 The strong allurements which they
 scarce may shun,
 The subtle wiles, the innocent lives
 undone,
 The tide of passion, scorning all con-
 trol,
 And thou art filled with an immense
 despair,
 Wherefrom thy heart beats slow, thy
 eyes grow dim,
 As when of yore thou heardest them
 lisp a hymn
 With early childish lips : thou canst
 not bear
 To think of that young whiteness soiled
 and foul,
 Or that thick darkness blotting the
 young soul.

Yet from thy grief and pain
 Comes oftentimes greater gain
 Than all thy loss.
 Thou knowest what it is to grieve,

And from the burden of thy cross
 Thou comest to believe.
 Thou who hast lost and yet dost love,
 Thou, too, a Father hast in some dim
 sphere above,
 Who doth regard thy joys, thy miseries,
 Thy petty doubts of Him, thy feeble
 learning,
 Thy faults, thy pains, thy childish doubt
 and yearning,
 Even as thou dost these.

II. MOTHERHOOD.

But here is one who over all the earth
 Is worshipped and is blest,
 Who doth rejoice from holier springs of
 mirth,
 And sorrow from a deeper fount of
 tears,
 On whose sweet bosom is our earliest
 rest,
 Whose tender voice that cheers
 Is our first memory, which still doth
 last
 Thro' all our later past—
 The love of love or child, the world-
 worn strife,
 The turmoil and the triumphs of a
 life—
 The sweet maid - mother, pure and
 mild,
 The deep love undefiled.

Thou art the universal praise
 Of every human heart, the secret shrine
 Where seer and savage keep a dream
 divine
 Through growing and declining days ;
 And but for thee
 And thy unselfish love, thy sacrifice,
 Which brings heaven daily nearer to
 our eyes,

Men whom the rude world stains, men
 chilled by doubt,
 Would find no ray of Deity
 To fire a Faith gone out.

Our life from a twofold root
 Springs upwards to the sky,
 One, surface only, shared with tree and
 brute,
 And one, as deep and strong as heaven
 is high.

Spirit and sense,
 Each bears its part and dwells in inno-
 cence

Yet only grown together can they bear
 The one consummate fruit.
 The flower is good, the flower is fair,
 But holds no lasting sweetness in its
 petals thin,

No seed of life within.
 But the ripe fruit within its orbèd gold
 Doth hidden secrets hold ;
 Within its honied wells set safe and
 deep,

The Future lies asleep.
 Of shamefastness our being is *born*,
 Of shamefastness and scorn.

Oh, wonder, that so high dost soar !

Oh, vision, blest for evermore !

With every throe of birth

Two glorious Presences make glad the
 earth

The stainless mother and the Eternal
 Child.

Of the heart comes love, of the heart
 and not the brain ;

To heights where Thought comes not
 can Love attain :

We cannot tell at all, we may not
 know,

How to such stature high our lower
 natures grow ;

What strong instinctive thrill
 The mother's being doth fill,
 And raises it from miry common ways,
 Up to such heights of love.

We cannot tell what blessed forces
 move,

And so transform the careless girlish
 heart

To bear so high a part.

We cannot tell ; we can but praise.

Fair motherhood, by every childish
 tongue

Thy eulogy is sung.

In every passing age

The theme of seer and sage :

The painters saw thee in a life-long
 dream ;

The painters who have left a world
 more fair

Than ever days of nymph and goddess
 were—

Blest company, who now for centuries
 Have fixed the virgin mother for our
 eyes—

The painters saw thee sitting brown or
 fair,

Under the Tuscan vines or colder
 Northern air ;

They saw pure love transform thy
 peasant gaze ;

They saw thy reverent eyes, thy young
 amaze

And left thee Queen of Heaven, wearing
 a crown

Of glory ; and abased at thy sweet
 breast,

Spurning his robes of kingship down,
 The God-child laid at rest.

They found thee, and they fixed thee
 for our eyes ;

But every day that goes

Before the gazer new Madonnas rise.
 What matter if the cheek show not the
 rose,
 Nor look divine is there nor queenly
 grace?
 The mother's glory lights the homely
 face.
 In every land beneath the circling sun
 Thy praise is never done.
 Whatever men may doubt, they put
 their trust in thee;
 Rude souls and coarse, to whom
 virginity
 Seems a dead thing and cold.
 So always was it from the days of old;
 So shall it be while yet our race doth
 last;
 Though truth be sought no more and
 faith be past,
 Still, till all hope of heaven be dead,
 Thy praises shall be said.

Aye, thou art ours, or wert, ere yet
 The loss we ne'er forget,
 The loss which comes to all who reach
 life's middle way
 We see thee by the childish bed
 Sit patient all night long,
 To cool the parching lips or throbbing
 head;
 We hear thee still with simple song
 Or sweet hymn lull the wakeful eyes
 to sleep;
 Through every turning of life's
 chequered page,
 Joying with those who joy, weeping
 with those who weep.
 Oh, sainted love! oh, precious
 sacrifice!
 Oh, heaven-lighted eyes!
 Best dream of early youth, best memory
 of age!

III. LABOUR.

They do the Maker wrong
 Who with the closing days of youth
 Shut fast the gate of Song;
 Nor ever shall I hold it truth,
 With those who feign to tell the tale of
 life,
 That only love is worth, the love that
 binds
 A youth and maid, nor care at all
 For the long summer ere the fruit shall
 fall,
 And deem unfit for song the glorious
 strife,
 The joy of toil and thought, the clash
 of vigorous minds,
 When knowledge flies before and we
 pursue,
 And who the Fair once followed,
 follow now the True.

Ah, full fair life! if something we have
 lost,
 If never more again
 We feel the ancient joy, the former pain,
 If no more passion-tost
 Upon the tides of life we hurry by,
 The white waves laughing as we plunge
 along,
 Nor watch the light clouds drift along
 the sky,
 While the glad South snatches us swift
 and strong
 To some blest isle beyond the purple
 wave,
 Where Love is Queen and Mirth, nor
 Prudence grave
 Nor Wisdom frowns, but to be glad is all,
 From jocund morn till dewy evening
 fall;
 Oh, if that sky is dark—those winds
 are still—

Another day has risen : again from the
East

Our treasure is increased ;
And as the orient Lord begins to grow,
New airs begin to blow ;
And on the calm majestic tide,
Our full-sailed galleon comes to glide,
Love, with its little skiff, has gone,
But Life's great bark sails on.

Toil is the law of life, and its best
fruit :

This from the uncaring brute
Divides ;—this and the prescient mind
whose store

Grows daily more and more.
Toil is the mother of wealth,
The nurse of health ;
Toil 'tis that gives the zest
To well-earned rest ;
The law of life laid broad and deep
As are the fixed foundations of the sea,
The medicine of grief, the remedy,
Wherefrom Life giveth his beloved
sleep.

Oh, labour truly blest !
Thou rulest all the race ;
Over all the toiling earth I see thy
gracious face
Stand forth confest.
Wherever thou art least,
In those fair lands beneath the tropic
blaze,
The slothful savage, likened to the
beast,
Drags on his soulless length of days ;
Where most thou art,
Man rises upward to a loftier height,
And views the earth and heaven with
clearer sight,
And holds a cleaner heart.

I see the toilers with the awaking morn,
Ere yet the day is born,
Go forth to labour over all the earth.

In northern darkness, 'midst the wintry
rain,

The great bell clangs thro' the smoke-
laden air ;

And ere light comes the workers
gather there,

While the great engines throb, the
swift wheels turn,

And the long, sickly gaslights flare and
burn ;

I hear the slow winch creak above the
pit,

While the black workers, who have
toiled all night,

Rise, dazed, to rest and light ;

I see the fisher on the waking sea ;

The great ship, full-manned, heaving
silently

Across the foam ; reapers in yellow
corn ;

The frosty shepherd in the early morn ;
The naked worker bent among the

cane

Or cotton ; the vinedresser, lean and
brown ;

The thousand labours of the busy town ;
The myriad trades which in each clime
and race

Build up man's dwelling-place ;

I see the countless toiling multitude ;

And all I see is good.

But to ends nobler still

The nobler workers of the world are
bent.

It is not best in an inglorious ease

To sink and dull content,

When wild revolts and hopeless
miseries

The unquiet nations fill ;

It is not best to rot
 In dull observance, while the bitter cry
 Of weak and friendless sufferers rends
 the sky,
 Wailing their hopeless lot ;
 Or rest in coward fear on former gain,
 Making old joys supply the present
 pain.

Nay, best it is indeed
 To spend ourselves upon the general
 good ;
 And, oft misunderstood,
 To strive to lift the knees and limbs
 that bleed ;—
 This is the best, the fullest meed.
 Let ignorance assail or hatred sneer
 Who loves his race he shall not fear ;
 He suffers not for long,
 Who doth his soul possess in loving,
 and grows strong.

Oh, student ! far into the night
 From youth to age
 Bent low upon the blinding page,
 Content to catch some gleam of light ;
 Art thou not happy, though the world
 pass by ?—

Happy though Honours seek thee not,
 nor Fame,
 And no man knows thy name ?—
 Happy in that blest company of old
 Whose names are writ in characters of
 gold

Upon the rocks of Time, the glorious
 band

Who on the shining mountains stand,
 Thinker and jurist, bard or seer,
 Whatever name is brightest and most
 dear ?

Or thou with docile hand,
 Obedient to the visionary eye,

Who 'midst art's precious work dost
 choose to stand
 Amid the great ones of the days gone
 by.

Oh, blest and glorious lot, always to be
 With dreams of beauty compassed
 round about !

The godlike mother and the child
 divine,

Or land or sea or sky, in calm or
 storm,

Nature's sincerest verities of form—

To see from canvas or from marble
 shine,

Little by little orbing gradually,
 Some trace of hidden Godhead gleam-
 ing out !

Or who, from heart and brain inspired,
 create,

Defying time, defying fate,

Some deathless theme and high,

Some verse which cannot die,

Some lesson which shall still be said

Altho' their tongue be lost and dead ;

Or who, in daily labour's trivial round,

Their fitting work have found ;

Or who on high, guiding the car of
 State,

Are set, a people's envy and their pride,

Who, spurning rank and ease and
 wealth,

And setting pleasure aside and health,

And meeting contumely oft and hate,

Have lived laborious lives and all too
 early died.

Or shall I silence keep

Of you, oh ministering women fair,

Who, while the world lies sunk in care-
 less sleep,

Still for the love of God and man can
 bear

To watch by alien sick-beds, and to
guard

With little hope and scant reward,
Midst misery and foul infected air,
The friendless and the dying? Shall I
dare

To sing of labour's meed, nor hold you
dear?

Dear souls, your joys are great, and yet
not wholly here;

In heaven they blossom best and grow
complete,

And beautiful upon the eternal moun-
tains are your feet.

Ay, labour, thou art blest.

From all the earth, thy voice, a con-
stant prayer,

Soars upward day and night.

A voice of aspiration after right;

A voice of effort yearning for its rest;

A voice of high hope conquering despair!

IV. REST.

There is a joy in rest;

There is a joy to cease and to be still.

This is the remedy of all the best,
To cure the pain of too laborious will.

Ah! it is sweet to lie reclined,

Reaping the fallow mind,

When all the sweat and drouth of day
is done,

And a cool breeze breathes from the
setting sun.

The toiler sits before his cottage door,
Set with musk-roses round, and eglan-
tine,

In dewy, scented, twilight-glooms
divine,

When all the trouble of the week is
o'er,

And sabbath rest comes with the even-
ing sun:

The joyous shouts come up from pool
or green;

Round the white chestnut-spikes the
beetles hum;

And down the hawthorn-haunted by-
ways come

The loitering lovers, hardly seen

Till springs aloft the clear, large moon
Of pleasant June.

Or by the palm-thatched hut at shut of eve,
The dusky toilers lie, when the red sun
Is sinking or has gone.

A cool wind rises landward from the sea;

The fire-flies glance like silver in the
palm;

On the fringed shore the thundering
rollers heave;

And all the simple souls are full of glee,

And the fair earth of calm.

Or on the hot and trackless sand,

In the sweet dying day,

Beyond the unknown monuments of the
dead,

The last muezzin calls, the prayers are
said,

And turbaned faces stern relax a while

To some unwonted smile,

Watching the large-eyed children at
their play.

Or maybe busy brains, which day by day
Life's struggle frets away,

Weary with fierce pursuit of fame or
wealth,

And prizing only health;

Over the joyous wave in some swift boat,

White-winged, delight to float

From land to land upon the tideless sea;

Borne careless still and free

By hoary cape and gleaming southern town,
 And many an islet clothed with palm and vine,
 And on the wine-dark sea-depths looking down,
 High based on wave-worn fronts, the marble shrine ;
 Or see the white town flush with dying day,
 And the red mountain fire the glimmering bay.

Or maybe on the icy hill they creep
 Above the pines, across the frozen sea,
 Whose blue abysses bare the unfathomed deep ;

Each to the other bound, and silently,
 Fearful lest some chance step or spoken word,

The avalanche trembling downward may have stirred ;

And up the giddy height
 Little by little, gaining slow,
 They gradually go,
 Till with hard toil of knee and hand,
 On the white summit panting but content,

With full hearts throbbing high and forces spent,

At last the climbers stand ;

For this of old is sure,

That change of toil is toil's sufficient cure.

Or by the lovely classic shore,
 The traveller sees with wondering eyes
 The treasure-house of art ; the store
 Of gracious memories
 Left by some cunning vanished hand,
 At whose supreme command
 The spirit of beauty rose and did appear :
 The angel with the lily ; the poor maid,
 Submissive, yet afraid ;

The fair Madonnas mild ;
 The deep ineffable Child ;
 The sweet boy-angels singing high and clear ;

The lady with the mystic smile ;
 The kneeling Magi from the fabled East ;
 The blessed Presence at the sacred feast ;
 And many a virgin martyr sweet,
 And many a youthful saint,
 Gazing from heavenly eyes and free of guile ;

Who, when the tortured life began to faint,

Looking in agony above,
 Saw the heavens opened, and the Paraclete

Descending like a dove.

Or maybe under secular trees
 Old when his ancestors were young,
 The statesman, in the golden autumn, sees

New glories for the eloquent tongue,
 New triumphs gained against the banded might

Of selfishness and fear, new struggles for the right ;

And in the falling evening and the sad
 Short light of waning days,
 Illumes his soul with subtle inward rays,
 And grows sedately glad.

These thy refreshments are, oh blest
 And necessary Rest !

Peaceful delights, which bear not soil
 and fret

As do the victories of toil, and yet
 Bear their own fruit exceeding fair :
 Renewal of the labouring mind,
 New hopes, new dawns, and carking care

A black night left behind.

THE ODE OF GOOD.

ETERNAL Spring, and Source
Of happiness and weal !
Indwelling and unfailing Force !
Who dost Thyself reveal
In every jocund day, and restful night ;
In every dawn serenely bright ;
In every tide of yearning which doth roll,
Heavenward, some growing soul !

What were life save for Thee
But pain and misery—
To have no more longing, but to be
Below the brute, below the tree,
Below the little stone, or speck of dust,
Which are themselves, and are made
just,
Conforming to the law which bade them
grow,
Not dreaming dreams of heaven in their
estate so low !

The calm brutes live and are,
Tranquil and unafraid,
Keeping their nature only ; the faint
star
Pursues its orbit always though of Thee
It knows not, yet its vast periphery
Is ordered by Thy hand ; by Thee were
laid
The fixed foundations of the unfathomed
sea ;—
All these obey Thee, though they may
not know
What law it is that holds them. Man
alone
Sees Thee, and knowing Thee, averts
his face,
And yet is higher than all for his disgrace,
Which were impossible to brute, or tree,
or stone

How shall a finite voice
Praise Thee who art too high for any
praise,
Great Scheme, that by eternal, perfect
ways
Farest and dost rejoice :
Thou wert before Life was, or Ill.
Thou rulest all things still ;
The Governance and Regimen are Thine,
Oh Plenitude divine !
Of all the countless orbs that roll
Through all Thy infinite space.
We are through Thee alone, each in its
place,
Organic, Inorganic, great and small ;
Thou dost inspire and keep us all ;—
Earth, sky, and sea ; herb, tree, insect,
and brute ;
All Thy created excellences mute,
To Man of large discourse, and the un-
dying soul.

We know not by what Name our
tongues shall call
Thee or Thy Essence, nor can Thought
as yet
Gain those ineffable heights where Thou
art set,
As from a watch-tower guarding all.
Thou girdest Thyself round with mys-
tery,
As Thy great sun behind an embattled
cloud,
Or some wrapt summit, never seen ;
Yet Thy veiled presence cheers us on
our road.
With eyes bent down too much on earth
and bowed,
We toil and do forget
All but our daily labour and its load ;
Yet art Thou there the while, felt yet
unseen,

Oh universal Good, and Thy great Will
 Directs our footsteps still—
 Directs them, though they come to stray
 From Thy appointed perfect way ;
 Lights them, though for a while they
 wander far,
 Led by some feeble baleful star,
 Which can allure them when the blind-
 ing fold
 Of mist is on the hill side, and the cold
 Clouds which make green our lives,
 descending, hide
 Death's steeps on every side.

We know not what Thou art—
 Whether the Word of some all-perfect
 Will
 Inborn and nourished in each human
 heart,
 Some hidden and mysterious good,
 Obeyed, not understood ;
 Or whether the harmonious note
 Of some world-symphony divine,
 To which the perfect Scheme of things,
 Ever advancing perfectly
 To high fulfilment, sings.
 We know not what Thou art, and yet
 we love ;
 We know not where Thou dwell'st, yet
 still above
 We turn our eyes to Thee, knowing
 Thou wilt take
 Our yearnings and wilt treasure them,
 and make
 Our little lives fulfil themselves and
 Thee :
 And in this trust we bear to be.

Oh Light so white and pure,
 Oft clouded and yet sure !
 Oh inner Radiance of the heart,
 That drawest all men, whatsoe'er Thou
 art !

Spring of the soul, that dost remove
 Winter with rays of love,
 And dost dispel of Thy far-working
 might
 The clouds of Ill and Night,
 For every soul which cometh to the
 earth ;
 That beamest on us at our birth,
 And paling somewhat in life's grosser
 day,
 Lightest, a pillar of fire, our evening
 way ;
 What matter by what Name
 We call Thee?—still art Thou the
 same,
 God call we Thee, or Good,—still
 through the strife
 Unchangeable alone, of all our change-
 ful life,
 With awe-struck souls we seek Thee, we
 adore
 Thy greatness ever more and more,
 We turn to Thee with worship, till at
 last,
 Our journey well-nigh past,
 When now our day of Life draws to its
 end,
 Looking, with less of awe and more of
 love,
 To Thy high throne above,
 We see no dazzling brightness as of old,
 No kingly splendours cold,
 But the sweet Presence of a heavenly
 Friend.

THE ODE OF EVIL.

OH, who shall sing of Life and not of
 Ill?
 The essence of our will
 Is fullest liberty to stray,
 From out the green and blessed wav.

Amid the desert wastes of drought and death.

This is the power that makes us free,
This of our Being is the penalty ;
And maybe the Eternal Will,
Clothing itself with form to bid Creation be,

Took to itself some boundary, and awhile,

Self-limited, made vile
And subjected to Law the Majesty
Which all the Universe of Space did fill.

Evil is Life,
The conflict of great laws pervading space ;

Evil is strife,
Which keeps the creature in its ordered place.

If any hand divine should e'er withdraw

The fixed coercive potency of Law,
Surely the Universe of things would fade
And cease and be unmade.

Where Law is, there is Good,
And freedom to obey or to transgress ;
Else 'twere no Law, but, weaker far
and less,

If one created soul might not the thing
it would.

Young lives spring up and fade,
Wither and are oppress,
Toil takes the world, and pain,
And all the things that God has made
Travail and groan and fain would be at rest,

And Wrong prevails again.
And we—we lift a hopeless eye
Up to the infinite sky,
Mourning the Ill that is, and shall be yet,

Weak creatures who forget

The very law and root of Life,
That it is sown in pain and nursed in woe and strife.

The evil blight of war
Torments the race from age to age,
And man slays man through all the years that are,

And savage lust and brutal rage
Deform this glorious heritage of earth.
We shudder and grow faint,
Knowing the dim fair dreams of seer
and saint

Show thin and little worth.
The young life, rising, sinks in sloughs
of sense,

And wanders and is lost.
Alas ! for days of young-eyed innocence.
Alas ! for the calm hours ere, passion-crost,

The young soul grew, a white flower
sweet and pure.

Yet not the less 'tis sure
That not in tranquil zones of endless calm

Grows best the victor's palm,
But blown by circling storms which blot the sky,

Nor fitting were it to the eye
Always to look upon a cloudless sun,—
Grown blind with too much light before
the journey done.

The victories of Right
Are born of strife.

There were no Day were there no
Night,

Nor, without dying, Life.
There only doth Right triumph, where
the Wrong

Is mightiest and most strong ;
There were no Good, indeed, were there
no Ill.

And when the final victory shall come,
Burst forth, oh Awful Sun, and draw
Creation home.

Not within Time or Space
Lines drawn in opposite ways grow
one,
But in some Infinite place
Before the Eternal throne ;
There, ways to-day divergent, Right
and Wrong,
Approach the nearer that they grow
more long.
There at the Eternal feet,
Fused, joined, and grown complete,
The circle rounds itself, the enclosing
wall
Of the Universe sinks down, and God
is all in all !

THE ODE OF AGE.

THERE is a sweetness in autumnal
days,
Which many a lip doth praise ;
When the earth, tired a little and grown
mute
Of song, and having borne its fruit,
Rests for a little space ere winter come.
It is not sad to turn the face towards
home,
Even though it shows the journey
nearly done ;
It is not sad to mark the westering
sun,
Even though we know the imminent
night doth come.
Silence there is, indeed, for song,
Twilight for noon ;
But for the steadfast soul and strong
Life's autumn is as June.

As June itself, but clearer, calmer far ;
Here come no passion-gusts to mar,
No thunder-clouds or rains to beat
To earth the blossoms and the wheat.
No high tumultuous noise
Of youth's self seeking joys,
But a cold radiance white
As the moon shining on a frosty night.

To-morrow is as yesterday, scant
change,
Little of new or strange,
No glamour of false hope to daze,
Nor glory to amaze,
Even the old passionate love of love or
child

A temperate affection mild,
And ever the recurring thought
Returning, though unsought :
How strange the Scheme of Things !
how brief a span

The little life of man !
And ever as we mark them, fleetest and
more fleet,
The days and months and years, gliding
with winged feet.

And ever as the hair grows grey,
And the eyes dim,
And the lithe form which toiled the
live-long day,

The stalwart limb,
Begin to stiffen and grow slow,
A higher joy we know :
To spend the remnant of the waning
year,

Ere comes the deadly chill,
In works of mercy, and to cheer
The feet which toil against life's rugged
hill ;

To have known the trouble and the fret,
To have known it, and to cease

In a pervading peace,
 Too calm to suffer pain, too living to
 forget,
 And reaching down a succouring hand
 To where the sufferers are,
 To lift them to the tranquil heights afar,
 Whereon Time's conquerors stand.

And when the fruitful hours are done,
 How sweet at set of sun
 To gather up the fair laborious day !—
 To have struck some blow for right
 With tongue or pen ;
 To have smoothed the path to light
 For wandering men ;
 To have chased some fiend of Ill away ;
 A little backward to have thrust
 The instant powers of Drink and Lust,
 To have borne down gaunt Despair,
 To have dealt a blow at Care !
 How sweet to light again the glow
 Of hotter fires than youth's, tho' all the
 blood runs slow !

Oh ! is there any joy,
 Of all that come to girl or boy
 Or manhood's calmer weal and ease,
 To vie with these ?
 Here is some fitting profit day by day,
 Which nought can render less ;
 Some glorious gain Fate cannot take
 away,
 Nor Time depress.
 Oh, brother, fainting on your road !
 Poor sister, whom the righteous shun !
 There comes for you, ere life and
 strength be done,
 An arm to bear your load.
 A feeble body, maybe bent, and old,
 But bearing 'midst the chills of age
 A deeper glow than youth's ; a nobler
 rage ;
 A calm heart yet not cold.

A man or woman, weak perhaps, and
 spent,
 To whom pursuit of gold or fame
 Is as a fire grown cold, an empty name,
 Whom thoughts of Love no more allure,
 Who in a self-made nunnery dwell,
 A cloistered calm and pure,
 A beatific peace greater than tongue can
 tell.

And sweet it is to take,
 With something of the eager haste of
 youth,
 Some fainter glimpse of Truth
 For its own sake ;
 To observe the ways of bee, or plant,
 or bird ;
 To trace in Nature the ineffable Word,
 Which by the gradual wear of secular
 time,
 Has worked its work sublime ;
 To have touched, with strenuous grop-
 ings dim,
 Nature's extremest outward rim ;
 To have found some weed or shell un-
 known before ;
 To advance Thought's infinite march a
 footpace more ;
 To make or to declare laws just and
 sage ;
 These are the joys of Age.

Or by the evening hearth, in the old
 chair,
 With children's children at our knees,
 So like, yet so unlike the little ones of
 old—
 Some little lad with curls of gold,
 Some little maid demurely fair,
 To sit, girt round with ease,
 And feel how sweet it is to live,
 Careless what fate may give ;
 To think, with gentle yearning mind

Of dear souls who have crossed the Infinite Sea ;
 To muse with cheerful hope of what shall be
 For those we leave behind
 When the night comes which knows no earthly morn ;
 Yet mingled with the young in hopes and fears,
 And bringing from the treasure-house of years
 Some fair-set counsel long-time worn ;
 To let the riper days of life,
 The tumult and the strife,
 Go by, and in their stead
 Dwell with the living past, so living, yet so dead :
 The mother's kiss upon the sleeper's brow,
 The little fish caught from the brook,
 The dead child-sister's gentle voice and look,
 The school-days and the father's parting hand ;
 The days so far removed, yet oh ! so near,
 So full of precious memories dear ;
 The wonder of flying Time, so hard to understand !

Not in clear eye or ear
 Dwells our chief profit here.
 We are not as the brutes, who fade and make no sign ;
 We are sustained where'er we go,
 In happiness and woe,
 By some indwelling faculty divine,
 Which lifts us from the deep
 Of failing senses dim, and duller brain,
 And wafts us back to youth again ;
 And as a vision fair dividing sleep,
 Pierces the vasts behind, the voids before,

And opens to us an invisible gate,
 And sets our winged footsteps, scorning Time and Fate,
 At the celestial door.

THE ODE OF DECLINE.

WITH forces well-nigh spent,
 Uneasy or in pain,
 Or brought to childish weakness once again,
 With bodies shrunk and bent,
 We come, if Fate so will, to cold decrepit age.
 The book of Life lies open at its latest page.

Only four score of summers, and four score
 Of winters, nothing more,
 And then 'tis done.
 We have spent our fruitful days beneath the sun ;
 We come to a cold season and a bare,
 Where little is sweet or fair.
 We, who a few brief years ago,
 Would passionately go
 Across the fields of life to meet the morn,
 We are content, content and not forlorn,
 To lie upon our beds, and watch the Day
 Which kissed the Eastern peaks, grow gradually grey.

Great Heaven, that Thou hast made our lives so brief
 And swiftly spent !
 We toil our little day and are content,
 Though Time, the thief,
 Stands at our side, and smiles his mystic smile.

We joy a little, we grieve a little while ;
 We gain some little glimpse of Thy
 great laws,
 Rolling in thunder through the voids
 of space ;
 We gain to look a moment on Thy
 face,

Eternal Source and Cause !
 And then, the night descending as a
 cloud,

We walk with aspect bowed,
 And turn to earth and see our Life
 grow dark.

Was it for this the fiery spark
 Of Thy Eternal Self, sown on the vast
 And infinite abysses of the Past,
 Revealed itself and made Creation rise
 Before Thy Eternal Mind :
 This little span of life, with purblind
 eyes

That grow completely blind ;
 This little force of brain,
 Holding dim thoughts sublime,
 Too weak to withstand the treacheries
 of Time ;

This body bent and bowed in twain,
 Soon racked by growing pain,
 Which briefer far than is the life of the
 tree,

Springs as a flower and fades, and then
 must rot

And perish and be not,
 Passing from mystery to mystery ?

It is a pain
 To move through the old fields,—even
 though they lie
 Before our eyes, we know that never
 again,

Where once our daily feet were used to
 pass

Amid the crested grass,
 We any more shall wander till we die ;

Nor to the old grey church, with the
 tall spire,

Whose vane the sunsets fire,
 Where once a little child, by kind hands
 led,

Would spell the scant memorials of the
 dead,—

Never again, or once alone,
 When pain and Time are done.

The soaring thoughts of youth
 Are dead and cold, the victories of
 Thought

Are no more prized or sought
 By eyes which draw too near the face
 of Truth.

Whatever fruit or gain
 Fate held in store,
 To tempt the growing soul or brain,
 Allures no more.

It is as the late Autumn, when the
 fields

Are bare of flower or fruit ;
 Nor charm nor profit the swept surface
 yields,

Sullen and mute ;
 So that a doubting mind might come to
 hold

The very soul and life were dead and
 cold.

But who can peer
 Into another soul, or tell at all
 What hidden energies befall
 The aged lingering here ?
 When all the weary brain
 Seems dull, the immeasurable fields of
 life

Lie open to the memory, and again
 They know the youthful joys, the
 hurry and the strife,
 And feel, but gentlier now, the ancient
 pain.

In the uneasy vigils of the night,
 Before the tardy light ;
 Or, lonely days, when no young lives
 are by,
 There come such long processions of
 the dead,
 The buried lives and hopes of far-off
 years,
 Spent joys and dried-up tears,
 That round them stands a blessed
 company,
 Holding high converse, though no
 word be said,
 Till only what is past and gone doth
 seem
 To live, and all the Present is a dream.

So may the wintry earth,
 Holding her precious seeds within the
 ground,
 Pause for the coming birth,
 When like a trumpet-note the Spring
 shall sound ;
 So may the roots which, buried deep
 And safe within her sleep,
 Whisper as 'twere, within, tales of the
 sun,—
 Whisper of leaf and flower, of bee and
 bird,—
 Till by a sudden glory stirred,
 A mystic influence bids them rise,
 Bursting the narrow sheath
 And cerement of death,
 And bloom as lilies again beneath the
 recovered skies.

THE ODE OF CHANGE.

I HAVE come to the time of the failing
 of breath ;
 I have reached the cold threshold of
 Death !

Death ! there is not any Death ; only
 infinite change,
 Only a place of life which is novel and
 strange.

Change ! there is naught but change
 and renewal of strife,
 Which make up the infinite changes
 we sum up in life.

Life ! what is life, that it ceases with
 ceasing of breath ?

Death ! what were Life without change,
 but an infinite Death ?

As I lie on my bed, and the sun, like
 a furnace of fire,

Burns amid the old pines in the west,
 ere the last ray expire,

Can I dream he will rise no more, but
 a fathomless night

Shall brood o'er Creation for ever, and
 shut out the light ?

It is done, this Day of our Life ; but
 another shall rise,

Day for ever following Day, in the
 infinite skies,

Day following Day for ever !

Day following day, with the starlit
 darkness between ;

Or, maybe in a world where Dawn
 comes, ere our sunset has been ;

Day following Day for ever !

For ever ! though who shall tell in
 what seeming or where ?

In what far-off secret space of God's
 limitless air ?

It matters nothing at all what we are
 or where set,

If a spark of the Infinite Light can
 shine on us yet.

Life following Life for ever !

Life following Life for ever ! for what
 if the Sun
 Grew chilled, and the Universe cold,
 and the orbits undone,
 And all the great globes should fall
 back into chaos once more ;
 They would wake at a glance of the
 Light, as they wakened before.
 There is no Death for ever !

Cease ! but how should we cease while
 God's light shall remain ?
 He that has lighted Life's flame shall
 light it again !
 What if He take back for a while, as
 the Sun from the Sea,
 Some spark of the radiance divine that
 bade all things to be ?
 We rest in Him, we are sunk, we are
 folded in Him, but we are ;
 As the star which draws near to the Sun
 is obscured, but is still a star.
 There is only Change for ever !

Shall I fear that I shall be changed and
 no more shall be I ?—
 I who know not what 'tis that I am, to
 live or to die ?
 Nay, while God is, I too must be, else
 too weak were His hand ;
 The created is part of His essence,—
 how else could the Maker stand ?
 There is no Death for ever !

Take me, oh infinite Cause, and cleanse
 me of wrong !
 Take me, raise me to higher Being
 through centuries long !
 Cleanse me, by pain, if need be,
 through æons of days !
 Take me and purge me, still I will
 answer with praise—
 There is no Death for ever !

Shall I mourn for those who are not
 Nay, while love and regret
 Still linger within our souls, they live
 with us yet.
 If we love, then the souls that we love,
 they exist and they are,
 As memory which makes us ourselves,
 brings precious things from far.
 Love lives and is for ever !

We are part of an Infinite Scheme,
 All we that are ;
 Man the high crest and crown of
 things that be,
 The fiery-hearted earth, the cold un-
 fathomed sea,
 The central sun, the intermittent star.
 Things great and small,
 We are but parts of the Eternal All ;
 We live not in a barren, baseless
 dream ;
 No endless, ineffectual chain
 Of chance successions launched in
 vain ;
 But every beat of Time,
 Each sun that shines or fails to shine,
 Each animate life that comes to throb
 or cease,
 Each life of herb or tree
 Which blooms and fruits and then
 forgets to be,
 Each change of strife and peace,
 Each soaring thought sublime,
 Each deed of wrong and blood,
 Each impulse towards an unattained
 good,—
 All with a sure, unfaltering working
 tend
 To one Ineffable, Beatific End.
 Oh hidden Scheme, perfect Thyself,
 and take
 Our petty lives, and mould them as
 Thou wilt !

All things that are, are only for Thy
sake,
And not to obey Thee is our only
guilt!
Perfect Thyself, and be fulfilled, oh
great
Unfathomable Will, who art our Life
and Fate!

There is hope, but nothing of fear,
Nought but a patient mind,
For him who waits with conscience
clear
And soul resigned

Whate'er the mystic coming change
Shall bring of new and strange.
He looks back once upon the fields of
life,
The good and evil locked in strife,
The happy and the unhappy days,
The Right we always love, the oft-
triumphant Wrong;
And all his Being to a secret song
Sings with a mighty and unfaltering
voice—
“I have been; Thou hast done all
things well; I am glad; I give
thanks; I rejoice!”

SONGS UNSUNG.

PICTURES—I.

ABOVE the abysmal undivided deep
A train of glory streaming from afar;
And in the van, to wake the worlds
from sleep,
One on whose forehead shines the
Morning-Star.

Long-rolling surges of a falling sea,
Smiting the sheer cliffs of an unknown
shore;
And by a fanged rock, swaying help-
lessly
A mast with broken cordage—nothing
more.

Three peaks, one loftier, all in virgin
white,
Poised high in cloudland when the day
is done,
And on the mid-most, far above the night,
The rose-red of the long-departed sun.

A wild girl reeling, helpless, like to fall,
Down a hushed street at dawn in mid-
summer;
And one who had clean forgot their
past and all,
From a lit palace casement pities her.

A young man, only clothed with youth's
first bloom,
In mien and form an angel, not in eye;

Hard by, a fell worm crawling from a tomb,
And one, wide-eyed, who cries, "The Enemy!"

A lake of molten fires which swell and surge
And fall in thunders on the burning verge;
And one a queen rapt, with illumined face,
Who doth defy the Goddess of the place.

Eros beneath a red-cupped tree, asleep,
And 'mid the flowers, and thro' the air above,
Fair boys with silver wings who smiling peep
Upon the languid loosened limbs of love.

A darkling gateway, thronged with entering ghosts,
And a grave janitor, who seems to say:
"Woe, woe to youth, to life, which idly boasts;
I am the End, and mine the appointed Way."

A young Faun making music on a reed,
Deep in a leafy dell in Arcady:
Three girl-nymphs fair, in musing thought take heed
Of the strange youth's mysterious melody.

A flare of lamplight in a shameful place
Full of wild revel and unchecked offence,
And in the midst, one fresh scarce-sullied face,
Within her eyes, a dreadful innocence.

A quire of seraphs, chanting row on row,
With lute and viol and high trumpet notes;
And, above all, their soft young eyes aglow—
Child angels, making laud from full clear throats.

Some, on a cliff at dawn, in agony;
Below, a scaly horror on the sea,
Lashing the leaden surge. Fast-bound, a maid
Waits on the verge, alone, but unafraid.

A poisonous, dead, sad sea-marsh,
fringed with pine,
Scarce lit by mouldering churches, old as Time;
Beyond, on high, just touched with wintry rime,
The long chain of the autumnal Apennine.

A god-like Presence, beautiful as Dawn,
Watching, upon an untrodden summit white,

The Earth's last day grow full, and
fade in night ;
Then, with a sigh, the Presence is
withdrawn.

A sheer rock-islet, frowning on the sea
Where no ship sails, nor ever life may
be :

Thousands of leagues around, from pole
to pole,
The unbounded lonely ocean-currents
roll.

Young maids who wander on a flower-
lit lawn,
In springtide of their lives as of the
year ;
Meanwhile, unnoticed, swift, a thing
of fear,
Across the sun, a deadly shadow drawn.

Slow, hopeless, overborne, without a
word,
Two issuing, as if from Paradise ;
Behind them, stern, and with un pitying
eyes,
Their former selves, wielding a two-
edged sword.

A weary woman tricked with gold and
gem,
Wearing some strange barbaric diadem,
Scorn on her lips, and, like a hidden fire,
Within her eyes cruel unslaked desire.

Two aged figures, poor, and blurred
with tears ;
Their child, a bold proud woman,
sweeping by ;
A hard cold face, which pities not nor
fears,
And all contempt and evil in her eye.

Around a harpsichord, a blue-eyed
throng
Of long-dead children, rapt in sounds
devout,
In some old grange, while on that
silent song
The sabbath twilight fades, and stars
come out.

The end of things created ; Dreadful
night,
Advancing swift on sky, and earth, and
sea ;
But at the zenith a departing light,
A soaring countless blessed company !

THE LESSON OF TIME.

LEAD thou me, Spirit of the World,
and I
Will follow where thou ledest, will-
ingly ;
Not with the careless sceptic's idle
mood,
Nor blindly seeking some unreal good ;
For I have come, long since to that full
day
Whose morning mists have fled and
curled away—

That breathless afternoon-tide when
the Sun
Halts, as it were, before his journey
done,

Calm as a river broadening toward the
main,
Which never plunges down the rocks
again,
But, clearly mirrored in its tranquil
deep,
Holds tower and spire and forest as in
sleep.

How old and worn the metaphor ap-
pears,
Old as the tale of passing hopes and
fears !
New as the springtide air, which day
by day
Breathes on young lives, and speeds
them on their way.

The Roman knew it, and the Hellene
too ;
Assyrian and Egyptian proved it true ;
Who found for youth's young glory and
its glow
Serener life, and calmer tides run slow.

And them oblivion takes, and those
before,
Whose very name and race we know
no more,
To whom, oh Spirit of the World and
Man,
Thou didst reveal Thyself when Time
began,—

They felt, as I, what none may under-
stand ;
They touched through darkness on a
hidden hand ;

They marked their hopes, their faiths,
their longings fade,
And found a solitude themselves had
made ;

They came, as I, to hope which con-
quers doubt,
Though sun and moon and every star
go out ;
They ceased, while at their side a still
voice said,
“ Fear not, have courage ; blessed are
the dead.”

They were my brothers—of one blood
with me,
As with the unborn myriads who shall
be :
I am content to rise and fall as they ;
I watch the dawning of the Perfect Day.

Lead thou me, Spirit, willing and
content
To be, if thou wouldst have me,
wholly spent.
I am thine own, I neither strive nor cry :
Stretch forth thy hand, I grasp it,
silently.

VENDREDI SAINT.

THIS is Paris, the beautiful city,
Heaven's gate to the rich, to the poor
without pity.
The clear sun shines on the fair town's
graces,
And on the cold green of the shrunken
river,
And the chill East blows, as 'twould
blow for ever,
On the holiday groups with their shin-
ing faces.

For this is the one solemn day of the
season,
When all the swift march of her gay
unreason
Pauses a while, and a thin veil of
sadness
Half hides, from strange eyes, the old
riot and madness,
And the churches are crowded with
devotees holy,
Rich and poor, saint and sinner, the
great and the lowly.

* * * *

Here is a roofless palace, where gape
Black casements in rows without form
or shape :

A sordid ruin, whose swift decay
Speaks of that terrible morning in
May
When the whole fair city was blood
and fire,
And the black smoke of ruin rose
higher and higher,

And through the still streets, 'neath
the broad Spring sun,
Everywhere murder and rapine were
done ;

Women lurking, with torch in hand,
Evil eyed, sullen, who soon should
stand

Before the sharp bayonets, dripping
with blood,

And be stabbed through and through,
or shot dead where they stood.

* * * *

This is the brand-new Hôtel de Ville,
Where six hundred wretches met death
in the fire ;

Ringed round with a pitiless hedge of
steel,

Not one might escape that swift ven-
geance. To-day

The ruin, the carnage, are clean swept
away ;

And the sumptuous façades, and the
high roofs aspire,

And, upon the broad square, the white
palace face

Looks down with a placid and meaning-
less grace,

Ignoring the bloodshed, the struggle,
the sorrow,

The doom that has been, and that may
be to-morrow,

The hidden hatred, the mad endeavour,
The strife that still is and shall be for
ever.

* * * *

Here rise the twin-towers of Notre Dame,
Through siege, and revolt, and ruin
the same.

See the people in crowds pressing
onward, slowly,

Along the dark aisles to the altar holy—
The altar, to-day, wrapt in mourning
and gloom,

Since He whom they worship lies dead
in the tomb.

There, by a tiny acolyte tended,
A round-cheeked child in his cassock
white,

Lies the tortured figure to which are
bended

The knees of the passers who gaze on
the sight,

And the people fall prostrate, and kiss
and mourn

The fair dead limbs which the nails
have torn.

And the passionate music comes from
the quire,

Full of soft chords of a yearning pity

The mournful voices accordant aspire
To the far-off gates of the Heavenly
City ;

And the clear, keen alto, soaring high
and higher,
Mounts now a surging fountain, now a
heavenward fire.

Ay, eighteen centuries after the day,
A world-worn populace kneel and pray,
As they pass by and gaze on the limbs
unbroken.

What symbol is this ? of what yearnings
the token ?

What spell this that leads men a part
to be

Of this old Judæan death-agony ?

And I asked, Was it nought but a
Nature Divine,

That for lower natures consented to
die ?

Could a greater than human sacrifice,
Still make the tears spring to the world-
worn eye ?

One thought only it was that replied,
and no other :

This man was our brother.

* * * *

As I pass from the church, in the cold
East wind,

Leaving its solemn teachings behind :
Once again, on the verge of the chill
blue river,

The blighted buds on the branches
shiver ;

Here, again, stream the holiday groups,
with delight

Gaping in wonder at some new sight.

'Tis an open doorway, squalid and low,
And crowds which ceaselessly come and

Careless enough ere they see the sight
Which leaves the gay faces pallid and
white :

Something is there which can change
their mood,

And check the holiday flow of the
blood.

For the face which they see is the face
of Death.

Strange, such a thing as the ceasing of
breath

Should work such miraculous change as
here :

Turn the thing that we love, to a thing
of fear ;

Transform the sordid, the low, the
mean,

To a phantasm, pointing to Depths
unseen.

There they lie, the dead, unclaimed
and unknown,

Each on his narrow and sloping stone.
The chill water drips from each to the
ground ;

No other movement is there, nor sound.
With the look which they wore when
they came to die,

They gaze from blind eyes on the piti-
less sky.

No woman to-day, thank Heaven, is
here ;

But men, old for the most part, and
broken quite,

Who, finding this sad world a place of
fear,

Have leapt forth hopelessly into the
night,

Bankrupt of faith, without love, un-
friended,

Dead-tired of life's comedy ere 'twas
ended.

But here is one younger, whose ashy
face

Bears some faint shadow of former
grace.

What brought him here? was it love's
sharp fever?

Was she worse than dead that he bore
to leave her?

Or was his young life, ere its summer
came,

Burnt by Passion's whirlwinds as by a
flame.

Was it Drink or Desire, or the die's
sure shame,

Which led this poor truant to deep
disgrace?

Was it hopeless misfortune, unmixed
with blame,

That laid him here dead, in this dread-
ful place?

Ah Heaven, of these nineteen long
centuries,

Is the sole fruit this thing with the
sightless eyes!

Yesterday, passion and struggle and
strife,

Hatreds, it may be, and anger-choked
breath;

Yesterday, fear and the burden of life;

To-day, the cold ease and the calmness
of death:

And that which strove and sinned and
yielded there,

To-day in what hidden place of God's
mysterious air?

Whatever he has been, here now he
lies,

Facing the stare of un pitying eyes.

I turn from the dank and dishonoured
face,

To the fair dead Christ by his altar
place,

And the same thought replies to my
soul, and no other—

This, too, was our brother.

"NO MORE, NO MORE."

"No more, no more," the autumnal
shadows cry;

"No more, no more," our failing
hearts reply:

Oh! that our lives were come to that
calm shore

Where change is done, and fading is
no more.

But should some mightier hand com-
pletion send,

And smooth life's stream unrippled to
its end,

Our sated souls, filled with an aching
pain,

Would yearn for fleeting days and years
again.

Thrice blessed be the salutary change
Which day by day brings thoughts and
feelings strange!

Our gain is loss, we keep but what we
give,

And only daily dying may we live.

THE NEW CREED.

YESTERDAY, to a girl I said—

"I take no pity on the unworthy dead,
The wicked, the unjust, the vile who
die;

'Twere better thus that they should rot
and lie.

The sweet, the lovable, the just
 Make holy dust;
 Elsewhere than on the earth
 Shall come their second birth.
 Until they go each to his destined
 place,
 Whether it be to bliss or to disgrace,
 'Tis well that both shall rest, and for a
 while be dead."
 "There is nowhere else," she said.

"There is nowhere else." And this
 was a girl's voice
 Who, some short tale of summers gone
 to-day,
 Would carelessly rejoice,
 As life's blithe springtide passed upon
 its way
 And all youth's infinite hope and bloom
 Shone round her; nor might any
 shadow of gloom
 Fall on her as she passed from flower
 to flower;
 Love sought her, with full dower
 Of happy wedlock and young lives to
 rear;
 Nor shed her eyes a tear,
 Save for some passing pity, fancy-bred.
 All good things were around her—
 riches, love,
 All that the heart and mind can move,
 The precious things of art, the un-
 defiled
 And innocent affection of a child.
 Oh girl, who always sunny ways dost
 tread,
 What curse is this that blights that
 comely head?
 For right or wrong there is no further
 place than here,
 No sanctities of hope, no chastening
 fear?
 "There is nowhere else," she said.

"There is nowhere else," and in the
 wintry ground
 When we have laid the darlings of our
 love—
 The little lad with eyes of blue,
 The little maid with curls of gold,
 Or the beloved aged face
 On which each passing year stamps a
 diviner grace—
 That is the end of all, the narrow
 bound.
 Why look our eyes above
 To an unreal home which mortal never
 knew—
 Fold the hands on the breast, the clay-
 cold fingers fold?
 No waking comes there to the uncaring
 dead!
 "There is nowhere else," she said.

Strange; is it old or new, this deep
 distress?
 Or do the generations, as they press
 Onward for ever, onward still,
 Finding no truth to fill
 Their starving yearning souls, from year
 to year
 Feign some new form of fear
 To fright them, some new terror
 Couched on the path of error,
 Some cold and desolate word which,
 like a blow,
 Forbids the current of their faith to flow,
 Makes slow their pulse's eager beat,
 And, chilling all their wonted heat,
 Leaves them to darkling thoughts and
 dreads a prey,
 Uncheered by dawning shaft or setting
 ray?

Ah, old it is, indeed, and nowise new.
 This is the poison-growth that grew

In the old thinkers' fancy-haunted
ground.

They, blinded by some keen too-vivid
gleam

Of the Unseen, to which all things did
seem

To shape themselves and tend,
Solved, by some Giant Force, the
Mystery of Things,

And, soaring all too high on Fancy's
wings,

Saw in dead matter both their Source
and End.

They felt the self-same shock and pain
As I who hear these prattlings cold to-
day.

Not otherwise of old the fool to his
heart did say.

"There is no other place of joy or
grief,

Nor wrong in doubt, nor merit in belief :
There is no God, nor Lord of quick
and dead ;

There is nowhere else," they said.

And, indeed, if any to whom life's path
were rough

Should say as you, he had cause maybe
at sight.

Truly, the way is steep and hard enough,
And wrong is tangled and confused
with right ;

And from all the world there goes a
solemn sound

Of lamentations, rising from the ground,
Confused as that which shocks the won-
dering ear

Of one who, gliding on the still lagune,
Finds the oar's liquid splash and tune
Lost in wild cries of frenzy and of
fear,

And knows the Isle of Madness draw-
ing near ;

And the great scheme, if scheme there
be indeed,

Is a book deeper than our eyes may
read,

Full of wild paradox, and vain endea-
vour,

And hopes and faiths which find com-
pletion never.

For such a one, in seasons of dismay
And dark depression deepening to
despair,

Clouds come oftentimes to veil the face
of day,

And there is no ray left of all the beams
of gold,

The glow, the radiance bright, the un-
clouded faith of old.

But you, poor child forlorn,

Ah ! better were it you were never born ;
Better that you had flung your heart
away

On some coarse lump of clay ;
Better defeat, disgrace, childlessness,
all

That can a solitary life befall,
Than to have all things and yet be
Self-bound to dark despondency,
And self-tormented, beyond reach of
doubt,

By some cold word that puts all yearn-
ings out.

"There is nowhere else," she said :

This is the outcome of their crude Belief
Who are, beyond all rescue and relief,
Being self-slain and numbered with the
dead.

"There is no God but Force,
Which, working always on its destined
course,

Speeds on its way and knows no thought
of change.

Within the germ the molecule fares free,
Holding the potency of what shall be ;
Within the little germ lurks the heaven-
reaching tree :

No break is there in all the cosmic
show.

What place is there, in all the Scheme
Immense,

For a remote unworking Excellence
Which may not be perceived by any
sense,

Which makes no humble blade of grass
to grow,

Which adds no single link to things and
thoughts we know ?”

“ For everything that is, indeed,
Bears with it its ow seed ;
It cannot change or cease and be no
more :

All things for ever are even as they
were before,

Or if, by long degrees and slow,
More complex doth the organism grow,
It makes no break in the eternal plan ;
There is no gulf that yawns between
the herb and man.”

Poor child, what is it they have taught,
Who through deep glooms and desert
wastes of thought

Have brought to such as you their dreary
creed ?

Have they no care, indeed,
For all the glorious gains of man’s long
past,

For all our higher hope of what shall
be at last ?

“ All things are moulded in one mould ;
They spring, they are, they fade by one
compulsion cold—

Some dark necessity we cannot know,
Which bids them wax and grow,—

That is sufficient cause for all things,
quick and dead !”

“ There is no Cause else,” she said.

Oh, poor indeed, and in evil case,
Who shouldst be far from sound of doubt
As a maiden in some restful place
Whose tranquil life, year in year out,
Is built on gentle worship, homely days
Lit each by its own light of prayer and
praise,

For whom the spire points always to
the sky,

And heaven lies open to the cloistered
eye.

For us, for us, who mid the weary strife
And jangling discords of our life
Are day by day opprest,

’Twere little wonder were our souls
distrest,

God, and the life to be, and all our
early trust

Being far from us expelled and thrust ;
But for you, child, who cannot know
at all

To what mysterious laws we stand or
fall,

To what bad heights the wrong within
may grow,

To what dark deeps the stream of hope-
less lives may flow !

For let the doubter cavil as he can,
There is no wit in man

Which can make Force rise higher
still

Up to the heights of Will,—
No phase of Force which finite minds
can know

Can self-determined grow,
And of itself elect what shall its essence
be :

The same to all eternity,

Unchanged, unshaped, it goes upon its
 blinded way ;
 Nor can all forces nor all laws
 Bring ceasing to the scheme, nor any
 pause,
 Nor shape it to the mould in which to be—
 Form from the wingèd seed the myriad-
 branching tree,—
 Nor guide the force once sped, so that
 it turn
 To Water-floods that quench or Fires
 that burn,
 Or now to the electric current change,
 Or draw all things by some attraction
 strange.
 Or in the brain of man, working unseen,
 sublime,
 Transcend the narrow bounds of Space
 and Time.

Whence comes the innate Power which
 knows to guide
 The force deflected so from side to side,
 That not a barren line from whence to
 where
 It goes upon its way through the un-
 fettered air ?
 What launched the prisoned atom on
 its fruitful course ?
 Ah, it was more than Force
 Which gave the Universe of things its
 form and face !
 Force moving on its path through Time
 and Space
 Would round no orb, but leave all
 barren still.
 A higher Power, it was, the worlds
 could form and fill ;
 And by some pre-existent harmony
 Were all things made as Fate would
 have them be—
 Fate, the ineffable Word of an Eternal
 Will.

All things that are or seem,
 Whether we wake who see or do but
 dream,
 Are of that Primal Will phantasms, if
 no more ;
 Who sees these right sees God, and
 seeing doth adore.
 Joy, suffering, evil, good,
 Whate'er our daily food,
 Whate'er the mystery and paradox of
 things,
 Low creeping thoughts and high ima-
 ginings.
 The laughter of the world, the age-
 long groan,
 Bring to his mind one name, one thought
 alone ;
 All beauty, right, deformity, or wrong,
 Sing to his ear one high unchanging song ;
 And everything that is, to his rapt
 fancy brings
 The hidden beat through space of the
 Eternal Wings.

Where did the Idea dwell,
 At first, which was of all the germ and
 seed ?
 Which worked from Discord order,
 from blind Force
 Sped all the Cosmos on its upward
 course ?
 Which held within the atom and the cell
 The whole vast hidden Universe, shel-
 tered well,
 Till the hour came to unfold it, and the
 need ?
 What did the ever-upward growth con-
 ceive,
 Which from the obedient monad formed
 the herb, the tree,
 The animal, the man, the high growths
 that shall be ?

Ever from simpler to more complex grown,	Shapes all the forms of things, and keeps them still
The long processions from a source un- known	Obedient to the Unknown Perfect Will.
Unfold themselves across the scene of life.	And shall the life that is the highest that we know,
Oh blessed struggle and strife, Fare onward to the end, since from a Source	Shall this, alone, no more increase, ex- pand and grow?
Thou art, which doth transcend and doth determine Force!	Nay, somewhere else there is, although we know not where,
Fare onward to the end; not from Force, dead and blind	Nor what new shape God gives our lives to wear.
Thou comest, but from the depths of the Creative Mind.	We are content, whatever it shall be : Content, through all eternity, To be whatever the Spirit of the World deem best ;—
Fare on to the end, but how should ending be,	Content to be at rest ;
If Will be in the Universe, and plan ?	Content to work and fare through end- less days ;
Some higher thing shall be, that which to-day is Man.	Content to spend ourselves in endless praise :
Undying is each cosmic force :	Nay, if it be the Will Divine,
Undying, but transformed, it runs its endless course.	Content to be, and through long lives to pine,
It cannot wane, or sink, or be no more.	Far from the light which vivifies, the fire
Not even the dust and lime which clothe us round	Which breathes upon our being and doth inspire
Lose their own substance in the charnel- ground,	All soaring thoughts and hopes which light our pathway here ;
Or carried far upon the weltering wind ;	Content, though with some natural thrill of fear,
Only with other growths combined, In some new whole they are for ever— They are, and perish never.	To be purged through by age-long pain,
The great suns shed themselves in heat and light	Till we resume our upward march again ;
On the vast vacant interstellar air, Till when their scattered elements unite They are replenished as before they were.	Content, at need, to take some lower form, Some humbler herb or worm
Nothing is lost, nor can be : change alone,	To be awhile, if e'er the eternal plan Go back from higher to lower, from man to less than man.
Unceasing, never done,	

Not so, indeed, we hold, but rather
 this—
 That all Time gone, that all that was
 or is,
 The scarpèd cliff, the illimitable Past,
 This truth alone of all truths else hold
 fast :—
 From lower to higher, from simple to
 complete,
 This is the pathway of the Eternal Feet ;
 From earth to lichen, herb to flowering
 tree,
 From cell to creeping worm, from man
 to what shall be.
 This is the solemn lesson of all time,
 This is the teaching of the voice
 sublime :
 Eternal are the worlds, and all that
 them do fill ;
 Eternal is the march of the Creative
 Will ;
 Eternâl is the life of man, and sun, and
 star ;
 Ay, even though they fade a while,
 they are ;
 And though they pause from shining,
 speed for ever still.

A GREAT GULF.

If any tender sire
 Who sits girt round by loving faces
 And happy childhood's thousand
 graces,
 Through sudden crash or fire
 Should 'scape from this poor life to
 some mysterious air,
 And, dwelling solitary there,
 Feel his unfilled and yearning father's
 heart
 Pierced through by some intolerable
 smart ;

And, sickening for the dear lost lives
 again,
 Through his o'ermastering pain
 Should break the awful bonds the
 Eternal sets between
 That which lives Here, and There, the
 Seen and the Unseen ;

And having gained once more
 This little Earth, should reach the
 scarce-left place
 Which greets him with unchanged
 familiar face—

The well-remembered door,
 The rose he watered blooming yet,
 Nought to remember or forget,
 No change in all the world except in
 him,
 Nor there save in some sense already dim
 Before the unaltered past, so that he
 seem
 A mortal spirit still, and what was
 since, a dream ;

And in the well-known room
 Finds all the blithe remembered faces
 Grown sad and blurred by recent traces
 Of a new sorrow and gloom,
 And when his soul to comfort them is
 fain

Mourns his voice mute, his form
 unknown, unseen,
 And thinks with irrepressible pain
 Of all the happy days which late have
 been,
 And feels his new life's inmost chambers
 stirred
 If only of his own, he might be seen or
 heard ;

Then if, at length,
 The father's yearning and o'erburdened
 soul

Burst into shape and voice which scorn
control

Of its despairing strength,—

Ah Heaven! ah pity for the present
dread

Which rising, strikes the old affection
dead!

Ah, better were it far than this thing
to remain,

Voiceless, unseen, unloved, for ever
and in pain!

So when a finer mind,

Knowing its old self swept by some
weird change

And the old thought deceased, or else
grown strange,

Turns to those left behind,

With passionate stress and mighty
yearning stirred,—

It strives to stand revealed in shape
and word

In vain; or by strong travail visible
grown,

Finds but a world estranged, and lives
and dies alone!

ONE DAY.

ONE day, one day, our lives shall seem
Thin as a brief forgotten dream:

One day, our souls by life opprest,
Shall ask no other boon than rest.

And shall no hope nor longing come,
No memory of our former home,
No yearning for the loved, the dear
Dead lives that are no longer here?

If this be age, and age no more
Recall the hopes, the fears of yore,
The dear dead mother's accents mild,
The lisping of the little child,

Come, Death, and slay us ere the
blood

Run slow, and turn our lives from good;
For only in such memories we
Consent to linger and to be.

SEASONS.

THE colds winds rave on the icy
river,

The leafless branches complain and
shiver,

The snow clouds sweep on, to a dreary
tune,—

Can these be the earth and the heavens
of June?—

When the blossoming trees gleam in
virginal white,

And heaven's gate opens wide in the
lucid night,

And there comes no sound on the
perfumed air

But the passionate brown bird, carolling
fair,

And the lush grass in upland and low-
land stands deep,

And the loud landrail lulls the children
to sleep,

And the white still road and the thick
leaved wood

Are haunted by fanciful solitude;

And by garden and lane men and
maidens walk,

Busied with trivial, loverlike talk;

And the white and the red rose, newly
blown,

Open, each with a perfume and grace
of its own.

The cold wind sweeps o'er the desolate
hill,
The stream is bound fast and the wolds
are chill ;
And by the dead flats, where the cold
blasts moan,
A bent body wearily plods alone.

THE PATHOS OF ART.

OFT, seeing the old painters' art,
We find the tear unbidden start,
And feel our full hearts closer grow
To the far days of long ago.

Not burning faith, or godlike pain,
Can thus our careless thought enchain ;
The heavenward gaze of souls sublime,
At once transcends, and conquers time.

Nor pictured form of seer or saint,
Which hands inspired delight to paint ;
Art's highest aims of hand or tongue,
Age not, but are for ever young.

But some imperfect trivial scene,
Of homely life which once has been,
Of youth, so soon to pass away,
Of happy childhood's briefer day ;

Or humble daily tasks portrayed—
The thrifty mistress with her maid ;
The flowers, upon the casement set,
Which in our Aprils blossom yet ;

The long processions, never done ;
The time-worn palace, scarce begun ;
The gondolier, who plies his oar
For stately sirs or dames of yore ;

The girl with fair hair morning-stirred,
Who swings the casement for her bird ;

The hunt ; the feast ; the simple mirth
Which marks the marriage or the
birth ;

The burly forms, from side to side
Swift rolling on the frozen tide ;
The long-haired knights ; the ladies
prim ;
The chanted madrigal or hymn ;

The opera, with its stately throng ;
The twilight church aisles stretching
long ;
The spires upon the wooded wold ;
The dead pathetic life of old ;—

These all the musing mind can fill—
So dead, so past, yet living still :
Oh dear dead lives, oh hands long gone,
Whose life, whose Art still lingers on !

IN THE STRAND.

IN the midst of the busy and roaring
Strand,

Dividing life's current on either hand,
A time-worn city church, sombre and
grey,
Waits, while the multitude passes away.

Beside it, a strait plot of churchyard
ground
Is fenced by a time-worn railing
around ;
And within, like a pavement, the
ground is spread
With the smooth worn stones of the
nameless dead.

But here and there, in the spaces
between,
When the slow Spring bursts, and the
fields grow green,

Every year that comes, 'mid the graves
of the dead

Some large-leaved flower-stem lifts up
its head.

In the Spring, though as yet the sharp
East be here,

This green stem burgeons forth year by
year :

Through twenty swift summers and
more, have I seen

This tender shoot rise from its sheath
of green.

New busy crowds pass on with hurry-
ing feet,

The young lives grow old and the old
pass away ;

But unchanged, 'mid the graves, at the
fated day,

The green sheath bursts upwards and
grows complete.

From the grave it bursts forth, 'mid the
graves it shall die,

It shall die as we die, as it lives we
shall live ;

And this poor flower has stronger
assurance to give,

Than volumes of learning, which
blunder or lie.

For out of the dust and decay of the
tomb,

It springs, the sun calling, to beauty
and bloom ;

And amid the sad city, 'mid death and
'mid strife,

It preaches its mystical promise of life.

CÆLUM NON ANIMUM.

Oh fair to be, oh sweet to be
In fancy's shallop faring free,
With silken sail and fairy mast
To float till all the world be past !

Oh happy fortune, on and on
To wander far till care be gone,
Round beetling capes, to unknown
seas,
Seeking the fair Hesperides !

But is there any land or sea
Where toil and trouble cease to be—
Some dim, unfound, diviner shore,
Where men may sin and mourn no
more ?

Ah, not the feeling, but the sky
We change, however far we fly ;
How swift soe'er our bark may speed,
Faster the blessed isles recede.

Nay, best it is at home to find
Food for the labouring heart and mind,
And take, since thus the world grows
fair,
Duty and pleasure everywhere.

Oh well-worn road, oh homely way,
Where pace our footsteps, day by day,
The homestead and the church which
bound
The tranquil seasons' circling round !

Ye hold experiences which reach
Depths which no change of skies can
teach,
The saintly thought, the secret strife
Which guide, which do perturb our
life.

NIOBE.

ON SIPYLUS.

AH me, ah me ! on this high mountain
peak,

Which far above the seething Lydian
plains

Takes the first dawn-shaft, and the sun-
set keeps

When all the fields grow dark—I,
Niobe,

A mother's heart, pent in a jail of
stone,

Stand all day in the vengeful sun-god's
eye,

Stand all night in the cold gaze of the
moon,

Who both long ages since conspiring,
slew

My children,—I a childless mother
now

Who was most blest, a grieving woman
still,

Who am bereft of all, yet cannot die.

Ah day, ill-fated day, which wrecked
my life !

I was the happy mother of strong sons,
Brave, beautiful, all in their bloom of
age :

From him my first-born, now a bearded
man,

Through the fair promise of imperfect
youth,

To the slim stripling who had scarcely
left

The women's chambers, on whose lip
scant shade

Of budding manhood showed, I loved
them all ;

All with their father's eyes, and that
strange charm

Of rhythmic grace, and musical utter-
ance

As when, in far-off Thebes, the en-
chanted wall

Rose perfect, to the music of his lyre.

Ah me, the fatal day ! For at high noon
I sate within my Theban palace fair—
Deep summer-time it was—and marked
the crowd

From the thronged city street, to the
smooth plain,

Stream joyously : the brave youths, full
of life,

Stripped for the mimic fray, the leap,
the race,

The wrestling ; and the princes, my
strong sons,

The fair limbs I had borne beneath my
zone

Grown to full stature, such as maidens
love, —

The sinewy arms, the broad chests, and
strong loins

Of manhood ; the imperfect flower-like
forms,

Eager with youth's first fires ; my
youngest born,

My darling, doffing his ephebic robe
Which late he donned with pride, a
child in heart,

In budding limbs a youth ;—I see them
go,

Their fair young bodies glistening in
the sun,

Which kissed the shining olive. As
they went,

The joyous concourse winding towards
the plain,

My happy eyes o'erflowed, and as I
turned

And saw my daughters round me, fair
grown lives

And virgin, sitting spinning the white
flax,
Each with her distaff, beautiful and
fit
To wed with any stately king of men
And reign a queen in Hellas, my glad
heart
Broke forth in pride, and as I looked I
thought,
"Oh happy, happy mother of such
sons !
Oh happy, happy mother of such girls !
For whom full soon the joyous nuptial
rites
Shall bring the expectant bridegroom
and the bride,
And soon once more the little childish
hands
Which shall renew my early wedded
years,
When the king loved me first. Thrice
blest indeed.
There is no queen in Hellas such as I,
Dowered with such fair-grown off-
spring ; not a queen
Nor mother o'er all earth's plain, around
which flows
The wide salt stream of the encircling
sea,
As blest as I. Nay, in Olympus' self
To all-compelling Zeus, what offspring
bare
Leto of yore ? Phœbus and Artemis,
A goodly pair indeed, but two alone.
Poor mother, that to such a lord as
Zeus
Bare only those, no fairer than my own.
Nay, I am happier than a goddess'
self ;
I would not give this goodly train of
mine
For that scant birth. I ask no boon of
Zeus,

Nor of the Olympian Gods ; for I am
glad.
No fruitful mother in a peasant's hut,
Scorning the childless great, thinks
scorn of me,
Being such as I. Nay, let Queen Leto's
self
Know, that a mortal queen has chanced
to bear
As fair as she, and more."
Even as I spoke,
While these unhallowed boastings
flushed my pride,
Through the closed lattice pierced one
angry shaft
Of blinding sun, which on the opposite
wall
Traced some mysterious sign, and on
my mind
Such vague remorse and consciousness
of ill,
That straight, that arrogant boldness
sank and died
In a great dread, nor hardly could I bear
To look upon the fairness of my girls,
Who, seeing the vague trouble in my
eyes,
Grew pale, and shuddered for no cause,
and gazed
Chilled 'midst the blaze of sunlight.
Then I strove
To laugh my fears away, as one who
knows
Some great transgression weigh on him,
some load
Which will not be removed, but bears
him down,
Though none else knows it, pressing
on his heart.
But when the half unuttered thought
grew dim
And my fear with it, suddenly a cry

Rose from the city street, and then the sound	Frenzied my brain, and all distraught with woe
Of measured hurrying feet, and looking forth	I to the palace tottered, while they bore
To where the youth had passed so late, in joy,	Slowly the comely corpses of my sons.
Came two who carried tenderly, with tears,	That day I dare not think of when they lay,
A boy's slight form. I had no need to look,	White shrouded, in the darkened palace rooms,
For all the mother rising in me knew	Like sculptured statues on a marble hearse.
That 'twas my youngest born they bore ; I knew	How calm they looked and happy, my dear sons !
What fate befell him—'twas the venge- ful sun,	There was no look of pain within their eyes,
And I alone was guilty, I, his mother, Who being filled with impious pride, had brought	The dear dead eyes which I their mother closed ;
Death to my innocent child. I hurried down	Me miserable ! I saw the priests ap- proach,
The marble stair and met them as they came,	And ministers of death ; I saw my girls Flung weeping on the brothers whom they loved.
Bearing his corpse, and kissed his lips and called	I saw it all as in a dream. I know not How often the dead night woke into day,
His name, yet knew that he was dead ; and all	How often the hot day-time turned to night.
His brothers stood regarding us with tears,	I did not shudder even to see the Sun Which slew my sons ; but in the still, dead night,
And would have soothed me with their loving words,	When in that chill and lifeless place of death,
Me guilty, who were guiltless, oh, my sons !	The cold, clear, cruel moonlight seemed to play
Till as I looked up from the dead,—a cry	Upon the rangèd corpses, and to mock My mother's heart, and throw on each a hue
Of agony,—and then another fell Struggling for life upon the earth, and then	Of swift corruption ere its time, I knew Some secret terror lest the jealous gods Might find some further dreadful ven- geance still,
Another, and another, till the last Of all my stalwart boys, my life, my pride,	Taking what yet was left.
Lay dead upon the ground, and the fierce sun	

At set of sun

The sad procession to the place of
graves

Went with the rites of royal sepulture,
The high priest at its head, the nobles
round

The dear white shrouded corpses: Last
of all

I went, the guilty one, my fair sweet
girls

Clinging to me in tears ; but I, I shed
not

A single tear—grief dried the fount of
tears,

I had shed all mine.

Only o'ermastering dread
Held me of what might come.

When they were laid,
Oh, wretched me, my dear, my well-
loved sons !

Within the kingly tomb, the dying sun
Had set, and in his stead the rising
moon,

Behind some lofty mountain-peak con-
cealed,

Relit some ghostly twilight. As we
knelt,

The people all withdrawn a little space,
I and my daughters in that place of
death,

I lifted up my suppliant voice, and they
With sweet girl accents pure, and
soaring hymn,

To the great Powers above.

But when at last

I heard my hollow voice pleading alone
And all the others silent, then I looked,
And on the tomb the cold malignant
moon,

Bursting with pale chill beams of light,
revealed

My fair girls kneeling mute and motion-
less,

Their dead eyes turned to the un pitying
orb,

Their white lips which should offer
prayer no more.

Such vengeance wreaked Phœbus and
Artemis

Upon a too proud mother. But on me
Who only sinned no other punishment
They took, only the innocent lives I
loved—

If any punishment, indeed, were more
Than this to one who had welcomed
death. I think

My children happier far in death than I
Who live to muse on these things.

When my girls
Were laid in earth, I, my lone palace
gate

Leaving without a tear, sped hither in
haste

To this high rock of Sipylus where erst
My father held his court ; and here,
long years,

Summer and winter, stay I, day and
night

Gazing towards the far-off plain of
Thebes,

Wherein I was so happy of old time,
Wherein I erred and suffered. Turned
to stone

They thought me, and 'tis true the
mother's heart

Which knows such grief as I knew,
turns to stone,

And all her life ; and pitying Zeus, in-
deed,

Seeing my suffering, listened to my
prayer

And left me seeming stone, but still the
heart

Of the mother grows not hard, and year
by year

When comes the summer with its cloud-
less skies,
And the high sun lights hill and plain
by day,
And the moon, shining, silvers them
by night,
My old grief, rising dew-like to my
eyes,
Quickens my life with not unhappy
tears,
And through my penitent and yearning
heart
There throbs again a pulse of love and
grief :
Love triumphing at last o'er Fate and
Death,
Grief all divine and vindicating Love.

PICTURES—II.

A LURID sunset, red as blood,
Firing a sombre, haunted wood ;
From whose recesses, dark and fell,
One hurries with a face of Hell.

Two at a banquet board alone,
In dalliance, the feast being done.
And one behind the arras stands,
Grasping an axe with quivering hands.

A high cliff-meadow lush with Spring ;
Gay butterflies upon the wing ;
Beneath, beyond, unbounded, free,
The foam-flecked, blue, pervading sea.

A clustering hill-town, climbing white
From the grey olives up the height,

And higher on the glaring sky
A huge sierra, dead and dry.

A rain-swept moor at shut of day,
And by the dead unhappy way
A lonely child untended lies :
Against the West a wretch who flies.

Cold dawn, which flouts the abandoned
hall,
And one worn face, which loathes it all ;
In his ringed hand a vial, while
The grey lips wear a ghastly smile.

Corinthian pillars fine, which stand
In moonlight on a desert sand ;
Others o'erthrown, in whose dark shade
Some fire-eyed brute its lair has made.

Mountainous clouds embattled high
Around a dark blue lake of sky ;
And from its clear depths, shining far,
The calm eye of the evening star.

A moonlight chequered avenue ;
Above, a starlit glimpse of blue :
And from the thick-laced shade be-
tween
The grey ghost of a woman seen.

A NIGHT IN NAPLES.

THIS is the one night in all the year
When the faithful of Naples who love
their priest

May find their faith and their wealth
increased ;
For just as the stroke of midnight is
here,

Those who with faithful undoubting
mind

Their "Aves" mutter, their rosaries
tell,

They without doubt shall a recompence
find ;

Yea, their faith indeed shall profit them
well.

Therefore, to-night, in the hot thronged
street

By San Gennaro's, the people devout,
With banner, and relic, and thurible
meet,

With some sacred image to marshal
them out.

For a few days hence, the great lottery
Of the sinful city declared will be,
And it may be that Aves and Paters
said

Will bring some aid from the realms of
the dead.

And so to the terrible place of the tomb
They issue, a pitiful crowd, through the
gloom,

To where all the dead of the city decay,
Waiting the trump of the judgment day.

For every day of the circling year
Brings its own sum of corruption here ;
Every day has its great pit, fed
With its dreadful heap of the shroudless
dead.

And behind a grated rust-eaten door,
Marked each with their fated month
and day,

The young and the old, who in life
were poor,
Fester together and rot away.

Silence is there, the silence of death,
And in silence those poor pilgrims
wearily pace,
And the wretched throng, pitiful, hold-
ing its breath,
Comes with shambling steps to the
dreadful place.

Till before these dark portals, the
muttering crowd
Breaks at length into passionate suff-
rages loud,
Waiting the flickering vapour thin,
Bred of the dreadful corruption within.

And here is a mother who kneels, not
in woe,
By the vault where her child was flung
months ago ;
And there is a strong man who peers
with dry eyes
At the mouth of the gulph where his
dead wife lies.

Till at last, to reward them, a faint blue
fire,
Like the ghost of a soul, flickers here or
there
At the gate of a vault, on the noisome
air,
And the wretched throng has its low
desire ;

And with many a praise of favouring
saint,
And curses if any refuses to heed,
Full of low hopes and of sordid greed,
To the town they file backward, weary
and faint.

And a few days hence, the great lottery
Of the sinful city declared will be,
And a number thus shewn to those
sordid eyes,
May, the saints being willing, attain
the prize.

Wherefore to Saint and Madonna be
said,
All praise and laud, and the faithful
dead !

* * * *

It was long, long ago, in far-off Judæa,
That they slew Him of old, whom
these slay to-day ;
They slew Him of old, in far-off
Judæa,—
It is long, long ago ; it was far, far away !

LIFE.

LIKE to a star, or to a fire,
Which ever brighter grown, or higher,
Doth shine forth fixed, or doth aspire ;

Or to a glance, or to a sigh ;
Or to a low wind whispering by,
Which scarce has risen ere it die ;

Or to a bird, whose rapid flight
Eludes the dazed observer's sight,
Or a stray shaft of glancing light,

That for an instant breaks the gloom
Which wraps some dark, forgotten
tomb,
Or some sweet Spring-flower's fleeting
bloom ;—

Mixed part of reason, part belief,
Of pain and pleasure, joy and grief,
As changeful as the Spring, and
brief ;—

A wave, a shadow, a breath, a strife,
With change on change for ever rife !—
This is the thing we know as life.

CRADLED IN MUSIC.

A BRIGHT young mother, day by day,
I meet upon the crowded way,
Who turns her dark eyes, deep and
mild,
Upon her little sleeping child.

For on the organ laid asleep,
In childish slumbers light, yet deep,
Calmly the rosy infant lies ;
The long fair lashes veil its eyes.

There, o'er its childish slumbers sweet,
The winged hours steal with noiseless
feet ;

Far off the music seems to cheer
The child's accustomed drowsy ear.

Hymn tune and song tune, grave and
gay,

Comfort him all the joyous day ;
And, half remembered, faintly seem
To mingle with his happy dream.

Poor child, for whom the summer long
Our dull days slip by, winged with
song ;

Sleeping for half the tuneful day,
Waking 'neath loving looks to play ;

Whose innocent eyes unconscious see
Nothing but mirth in misery.
Thy mother smiles, thy sister stands
Smiling, the tambour in her hands.

And with the time of hard-earned rest,
'Tis thine to press that kindly breast ;

Nor dream of all the toil, the pain,
The weary round begun again,—

The fruitless work, the blow, the curse,
The hunger, the contempt, or worse ;
The laws despite, the vague alarms,
Which pass not those protecting arms.

Only, as yet, 'tis thine to know
The bright young faces all aglow,
As down the child-encumbered street
The music stirs the lightsome feet,

Only to crow and smile, as yet.
Soon shall come clouds, and cold, and
wet ;
And where the green leaves whisper
now,
The mad East flinging sleet and snow.

And if to childhood thou shalt come—
Childhood that knows not hearth or
home,—
Coarse words maybe, and looks of
guile,
Shall chase away that constant smile.

Were it not better, child, than this,
The burden of full life to miss ;
And now, while yet the time is May,
Amid the music pass away.

And leave the dissonant cries of wrong
For the immortal, perfect song ;
And take the changeless heavenly life
For earth's poor vagrant toil and strife ;

And keep, within those opened skies,
A vision of thy mother's eyes ;
And hear those old strains, faint and
dim,
Grown fine, within the eternal hymn ?

Nay, whatsoe'er our thought may deem,
Not that is better which may seem ;
'Twere better that thou camest to be,
If Fate so willed, in misery.

What shall be, shall be—that is all ;
To one great Will we stand and fall.
"The Scheme hath need"—we ask not
why,
And in this faith we live and die.

ODATIS.

AN OLD LOVE-TALE.

CHARES of Mytilenê, ages gone,
When the young Alexander's conquer-
ing star
Flamed on the wondering world, being
indeed
The comrade of his arms, from the far
East
Brought back this story of requited
love.

— — —
A Prince there was of Media, next of
blood
To the great King Hystaspes, fair of
form
As brave of soul, who to his flower
of age
Was come, but never yet had known
the dart
Of Cypris, being but a soldier bold,
Too much by trenchèd camps and wars'
alarms
Engrossed, to leave a thought for things
of love.

Now, at this selfsame time, by Tanais
Omartes ruled, a just and puissant
king.

No son was his, only one daughter fair,
 Odatis, of whose beauty and whose
 worth
 Fame filled the furthest East. Only as
 yet,
 Of all the suitors for her hand, came
 none
 Who touched her maiden heart ; but,
 fancy free,
 She dwelt unwedded, lonely as a star.

Till one fair night in springtide, when
 the heart

Blossoms as does the earth, Cypris, the
 Queen,

Seeing that love is sweet for all to taste,
 And pitying these loveless parted lives,
 Deep in the sacred silence of the night,
 From out the ivory gate sent down on
 them

A happy dream, so that the Prince had
 sight

Of fair Odatis in her diadem

And habit as she lived, and saw the
 charm

And treasure of her eyes, and knew
 her name

And country as it was ; while to the
 maid

There came a like fair vision of the
 Prince

Leading to fight the embattled Median
 hosts,

Young, comely, brave, clad in his
 panoply

And pride of war, so strong, so fair, so
 true,

That straight, the virgin coldness of
 her soul

Melted beneath the vision, as the snow
 In springtime at the kisses of the
 sun.

And when they twain awoke to com
 mon day

From that blest dream, still on their
 tranced eyes

The selfsame vision lingered. He a form
 Lovelier than all his life had known,
 more pure

And precious than all words ; she a
 strong soul

Yet tender, comely with the fire, the
 force

Of youthful manhood ; saw both night
 and day.

Nor ever from their mutual hearts the
 form

Of that celestial vision waned nor grew
 Faint with the daily stress of common
 life,

As do our mortal phantasies, but still
 He, while the fiery legions clashed and
 broke,

Saw one sweet face above the flash of
 spears ;

She in high palace pomps, or house-
 hold tasks,

Or 'mid the glittering courtier-crowded
 halls

Saw one brave ardent gaze, one manly
 form.

Now while in dreams of love these
 lovers lived

Who never met in waking hours, who
 knew not

Whether with unrequited love they
 burned, or whether

In mutual yearnings blest ; the King
 Omar,es,

Grown anxious for his only girl, and
 knowing

How blest it is to love, would bid her
 choose

Whom she would wed, and summoning
the maid,

With fatherly counsels pressed on her ;
but she :

"Father, I am but young ; I prithee,
ask not

That I should wed ; nay, rather let me
live

My life within thy house. I cannot
wed.

I can love only one, who is the Prince
Of Media, but I know not if indeed
His love is his to give, or if he know
My love for him ; only a heavenly
vision,

Sent in the sacred silence of the night,
Revealed him to me as I know he is.

Wherefore, my father, though thy will
be law,

Have pity on me ; let me love my love,
If not with recompense of love, alone ;
For I can love none else."

Then the King said :

"Daughter, to me thy happiness is
life,

And more ; but now, I pray thee, let
my words

Sink deep within thy mind. Thou
canst not know

If this strange vision through the gate
of truth

Came or the gate of error. Oftentimes
The gods send strong delusions to
ensnare

Too credulous hearts. Thou canst not
know, in sooth,

If 'twas the Prince thou saw'st, or,
were it he,

If love be his to give ; and if it were,
I could not bear to lose thee, for indeed
I have no son to take my place, or pour
Libations on my tomb, and shouldst
thou wed

A stranger, and be exiled from thy
home,

What were my life to me? Nay,
daughter, dream

No more, but with some chieftain of
my realm

Prepare thyself to wed. With the new
moon

A solemn banquet will I make, and bid
Whate'er of high descent and generous
youth

Our country holds. There shalt thou
make thy choice

Of whom thou wilt, nor will I seek to
bind

Thy unfettered will ; only I fain would
see thee

In happy wedlock bound, and feel the
touch

Of childish hands again, and soothe my
age

With sight of thy fair offspring round
my knees."

Then she, because she loved her sire
and fain

Would do his will, left him without a
word,

Obedient to his hest ; but day and
night

The one unfading image of her dream
Filled all her longing sight, and day
and night

The semblance of her Prince in all the
pride

And bravery of battle shone on her.
Nor was there any strength in her to
heal

The wound which love had made, by
reasonings cold,

Or musing on the phantasies of sleep ;
But still the fierce dart of the goddess
burned

Within her soul, as when a stricken deer O'er hill and dale escaping bears with her The barb within her side ; and oft alone Within her secret chamber she would name The name of him she loved, and oft by night, When sleep had bound her fast, her pale lips formed The syllables of his name. Through the long hours, Waking or sleeping, were her thoughts on him ; So that the quenchless yearning long deferred Made her heart sick, and like her heart, her form Wasted, her fair cheek paled, and from her eyes Looked out the silent suffering of her soul. Now, when the day drew near which brought the feast, One of her slaves, who loved her, chanced to hear Her sweet voice wandering in dreams, and caught The Prince's name ; and, being full of grief And pity for her pain, and fain to aid The gentle girl she loved, made haste to send A messenger to seek the Prince and tell him How he was loved, and when the feast should be, And how the King would have his daughter wed. But to the Princess would she breathe no word	Of what was done, till, almost on the eve Of the great feast, seeing her wan and pale And all unhappy, falling at her knees, She, with a prayer for pardon, told her all. But when the Princess heard her, virgin shame— Love drawing her and Pride of Maiden- hood In opposite ways till all distraught was she— Flushed her pale cheek, and lit her lan- guid gaze. Yet since she knew that loving thought alone Prompted the deed, being soft and pitiful, She bade her have no fear, and though at first Unwilling, by degrees a newborn hope Chased all her shame away, and once again A long unwonted rose upon her cheek Bloomed, and a light long vanished fired her eyes. Meanwhile upon the plains in glorious war The brave Prince led his conquering hosts ; but still, Amid the shock of battle and the crash Of hostile spears, one vision filled his soul. Amid the changes of the hard-fought day, Throughout the weary watches of the night, The dream, the happy dream, returned again ; Always the selfsame vision of a maid
--	--

Fairer than earthly, filled his eyes and took
 The savour from the triumph, ay, and touched
 The warrior's heart with an unwonted ruth,
 So that he shrank as never yet before
 From every day's monotony of blood,
 And saw with unaccustomed pain the sum
 Of death and woe, and hopeless shattered lives,
 Because a softer influence touched his soul.

Till one night, on the day before the feast
 Which King Omartes destined for his peers,
 While now his legions swept their conquering way
 A hundred leagues or more from Tanais,
 There came the message from the slave,
 and he
 Within his tent, after the well-fought day,
 Resting with that fair image in his eyes,
 Woke suddenly to know that he was loved.

Then, in a moment, putting from him sleep
 And well-earned rest, he bade his charioteer
 Yoke to his chariot three unbroken colts
 Which lately o'er the endless Scythian plain
 Careered, untamed ; and, through the sleeping camp,
 Beneath the lucid aspect of the night,
 He sped as speeds the wind. The great stars hung
 Like lamps above the plain ; the great stars sank

And faded in the dawn ; the hot red sun
 Leapt from the plain ; noon faded into eve ;
 Again the same stars lit the lucid night ;
 And still, with scarce a pause, those fierce hoofs dashed
 Across the curved plain onward, till he saw
 Far off the well-lit palace casements gleam
 Wherein his love was set.

Then suddenly
 He checked his panting team, the rapid wheels
 Ceased, and his mail and royal garb he hid
 Beneath a rich robe such as nobles use
 By Tanais ; and to the lighted hall
 He passed alone, bidding his charioteer
 Await him in the darkness by the gate.

Now, when the Prince drew near the vestibule,
 The feast long time had sped, and all the guests
 Had eaten and drunk their fill ; and he unseen,
 Through the close throng of serving men and maids
 Around the door, like some belated guest
 To some obscurer station slipped, and took
 The wine-cup with the rest, who marvelled not
 To see him come, nor knew him ; only she
 Who sent the message whispered him a word :
 " Have courage ; she is there, and cometh soon.
 Be brave ; she loves thee only ; watch and wait."

Even then the King Omartes, where he
 sate
 On high among his nobles, gave com-
 mand
 To summon from her maiden chamber
 forth
 The Princess. And obedient to the call,
 Robed in pure white, clothed round
 with maiden shame,
 Full of vague hope and tender yearning
 love,
 To the high royal throne Odatis came.

And when the Prince beheld the maid,
 and saw
 The wonder which so long had filled
 his soul—
 His vision of the still night clothed with
 life

And breathing earthly air—and marked
 the heave

Of her white breast, and saw the tell-
 tale flush

Crimson her cheek with maiden
 modesty,

Scarce could his longing eager arms
 forbear

To clasp the virgin round, so fair she
 seemed.

But, being set far down from where the
 King

Sat high upon the daïs 'midst the crowd
 Of eager emulous faces looking love,
 None marked his passionate gaze, or
 stretched-forth hands ;

Till came a pause, which hushed the
 deep-drawn sigh

Of admiration, as the jovial King,
 Full tender of his girl, but flushed with
 wine,

Spake thus to her :

“ Daughter, to this high feast
 Are bidden all the nobles of our land.

Now, therefore, since to wed is good,
 and life

To the unwedded woman seems a load
 Which few may bear, and none desire,
 I prithee,

This jewelled chalice taking, mingle
 wine

As well thou knowest, and the honeyed
 draught

Give to some noble youth of those thou
 seest

Along the well-ranged tables, knowing
 well

That him to whom thou givest, thou
 shalt wed.

I fetter not thy choice, girl. I grow old ;
 I have no son to share the weight of rule,
 And fain would see thy children ere I
 die.”

Then, with a kiss upon her blushing
 cheek,

He gave the maid the cup. The cressets’
 light

Fell on the jewelled chalice, which
 gave back

A thousand answering rays. Silent she
 stood

A moment, half in doubt, then down
 the file

Of close-ranked eager faces flushed with
 hope,

And eyes her beauty kindled more than
 wine,

Passed slow, a breathing statue. Her
 white robe

Among the purple and barbaric gold
 Showed like the snowy plumage of a
 dove,

As down the hall, the cup within her
 hands,

She, now this way regarding and now
 that,

Passed, with a burning blush upon her
cheek ;

And on each youthful noble her large
eyes

Rested a moment only, icy cold,
Though many indeed were there, brave,
fair to see,

Fit for a maiden's love ; but never at
all

The one o'ermastering vision of her
dream

Rose on her longing eyes, till hope
itself

Grew faint, and, ere she gained the
end, she turned

Sickening to where, along the opposite
wall,

Sat other nobles young and brave as
those,

But not the fated vision of her dream.

Meanwhile the Prince, who 'mid the
close-set throng

Of humbler guests was hidden, saw her
come

And turn ere she had marked him, and
again

Down the long line of princely revellers
Pass slow as in a dream ; and all his
soul

Grew sick with dread lest haply, seeing
not

The one expected face, and being
meek

And dutiful, and reverent to her sire,
She in despair might make some sudden
choice

And leave him lovelorn. And where'er
she went

He could not choose but gaze, as oft in
sleep

Some dreadful vision chains us that we
fail

To speak or move, though to be still is
death.

And once he feared that she had looked
on him

And passed, and once he thought he
saw her pause

By some tall comely youth ; and then
she reached

The furthest wall, and as she turned
her face

And came toward him again to where
the jars

Of sweet wine stood for mingling, with
a bound

His heart went out to her ; for now her
cheek

As pale and lifeless as the icy moon,
And the dead hope within her eyes,
and pain

Of hardly conquered tears, made sure
his soul,

Knowing that she was his.

But she, dear heart,
Being sick indeed with love, and in
despair,

Yet reverencing her duty to her sire,
Turned half-distraught to fill the fated
cup

And with it mar her life.

But as she stood
Alone within the vestibule and poured
The sweet wine forth, slow, trembling,
blind with tears,

A voice beside her whispered, "I am
here !"

And looking round her, at her side she
saw,

A youthful mailed form—the festal robe
Flung backward, and the face, the
mouth, the eyes

Whereof the vision filled her night and
day.

Then straight, without a word, with
 one deep sigh,
 She held the wine-cup forth. He
 poured out first
 Libation to the goddess, and the rest
 Drained at a draught, and cast his
 arms round her,
 And down the long-drawn sounding
 colonnade
 Snatched her to where without, beneath
 the dawn,
 The brave steeds waited and the
 charioteer.
 His robe he round her threw ; they saw
 the flare
 Of torches at the gate ; they heard the
 shouts
 Of hot pursuit grow fainter ; till at
 last,
 In solitude, across the rounding plain
 They flew through waking day, until
 they came
 To Media, and were wed. And soon
 her sire,
 Knowing their love, consented, and
 they lived
 Long happy lives ; such is the might of
 Love.

That is the tale the soldier from the
 East,
 Chares of Mytilené, ages gone,
 Told oftentimes at many a joyous feast
 In Hellas ; and he said that all the
 folk
 In Media loved it, and their painters
 limned
 The story in the temples of their gods,
 And in the stately palaces of kings,
 Because they revered the might of
 Love.

IN WILD WALES.

I.—AT THE EISTEDDFOD.

THE close-ranked faces rise,
 With their watching, eager eyes,
 And the banners and the mottoes blaze
 above ;
 And without, on either hand,
 The eternal mountains stand,
 And the salt sea river ebbs and flows
 again,
 And through the thin-drawn bridge the
 wandering winds complain.

Here is the Congress met,
 The bardic senate set,
 And young hearts flutter at the voice of
 fate ;
 All the fair August day
 Song echoes, harpers play,
 And on the unaccustomed ear the
 strange
 Penillion rise and fall through change
 and counter-change.

Oh Mona, land of song !
 Oh mother of Wales ! how long
 From thy dear shores an exile have I
 been !
 Still from thy lonely plains,
 Ascend the old sweet strains,
 And at the mine, or plough, or humble
 home,
 The dreaming peasant hears diviner
 music come.

This innocent, peaceful strife,
 This struggle to fuller life,
 Is still the one delight of Cymric souls—
 Swell, blended rhythms ! still
 The gay pavilions fill.

Soar, oh young voices, resonant and fair ;

Still let the sheathed sword gleam above the bardic chair.

* * * *

The Menai ebbs and flows,
And the song-tide wanes and goes,
And the singers and the harp-players
are dumb ;

The eternal mountains rise
Like a cloud upon the skies,
And my heart is full of joy for the
songs that are still,
The deep sea and the soaring hills, and
the steadfast Omnipotent Will.

II.—AT THE MEETING FIELD.

HERE is the complement of what I saw
When late I sojourned in the halls of
song,
The greater stronger Force, the higher
Law,
Of those which carry Cymric souls
along.

No dim Cathedral's fretted aisles were
there,
No gay pavilion fair, with banners
hung :
The eloquent pleading voice, the
deep hymns sung,
The bright sun, and the clear un-
fettered air.

These were the only ritual, this the
fane,
A poor fane doubtless and a feeble
rite
For those who find religion in dim
light,
Strange vestments, incensed air, and
blazoned pane.

But the rapt crowd, the reverent mute
throng,

When the vast listening semi-circle
round,

Rang to the old man's voice serenely
strong,

Or swept along in stormy bursts of
sound.

Where found we these in temples made
with hands ?

Where, the low moan which marks
the awakened soul ?

Where, this rude eloquence whose
strong waves roll

Deep waters, swift to bear their Lord's
commands ?

Where found we these ? 'neath what
high fretted dome ?

I know not. I have knelt 'neath
many, yet

Have heard few words so rapt and
burning come,

Nor marked so many eyes divinely
wet,

As here I knew—"What will you do,
oh friends,

When life ebbs fast and the dim light
is low,

When sunk in gloom the day of plea-
sure ends,

And the night cometh, and your
being runs slow,

And nought is left you of your revel-
ries,

Your drunken nights, your wanton-
ness, your ill—

And lo ! the last dawn rises cold and
chill,

And lo ! the lightning of All-seeing eyes,

What will you do?" And when the
low voice ceased,
And from the gathered thousands
surged the hymn,
Some strong power choked my voice,
my eyes grew dim.
I knew that old man eloquent, a priest.

There is a consecration not of man,
Nor given by laid-on hands nor
acted rite,
A priesthood fixed since the firm earth
began,
A dedication to the eye of Light,

And this is of them. What the form
of creed
I care not, hardly the fair tongue I
know,
But this I know, that when the con-
course freed
From that strong influence, went
sedate and slow,

I thought when on the Galilean shore
By the Great Priest the multitudes
were led,
The bread of life, miraculously more,
Sufficed for all who came, and they
were fed.

SUFFRAGES.

"SURELY," said a voice, "O Lord,
Thy judgments
Are dreadful and hard to understand.
Thy laws which Thou madest, they
withstand Thee,
They stand against Thee and Thy
command :
Thy poor, they are with us evermore ;
They suffer terrible things and sore ;

They are starved, they are sick, they
die,
And there is none to help or heed ;
They come with a great and bitter
cry,
They hardly dare to whisper, as they
plead ;
And there is none to hear them, God or
man ;
And it is little indeed that all our pity
can.

What, and shall I be moved to tears,
As I sit in this still chamber here alone,
By the pity of it,—the childish lives
that groan,
The miseries and the sorrows, the hopes
and the fears
Of this wonderful legend of life, that is
one and the same
Though it differ in weal and in happi-
ness, honour and fame,—
Shall I turn, who am no more than a
worm, to Thee,
From the pity of it—the want, the
misery,
And with strong yearnings beat, and
rebellions wild,
Seeing death written, and pain, in the
face of a child ;—
And yet art Thou unmoved !
Ah, Lord, if Thou sawest surely !—and
yet Thou dost see ;
And if Thou knewest indeed !—and
yet all things are clear to Thee.

For, Lord, of a truth Thy great ones,
Who have not their wealth of their own
desert,
Live ever equal lives and sure,
And are never vexed nor suffer hurt,
But through long untroubled years
endure

Until they join Thee, and are in bliss ;
Or, maybe, are carried away from
Thee, and miss

Thy Face, which is too pure for them
to see,

And are thenceforth in misery :

But, nevertheless, upon the earth

They come to neither sorrow nor
dearth.

They are great, and they live out their
lives, and Thou lettest them be ;

Thou dost not punish them here, if
they despise

Thy poor and pass them by with averted
eyes.

They are strong and mighty, and never
in danger to fall ;

But Thou, Lord, art mighty and canst,
and yet carest not at all.

But wherefore is it that such things
are ;—

That want and famine, and blood and
war

Are everywhere, and do prevail ?

And wherefore is it the same monoton-
ous tale

Is ever told by the lips of men ?

For there is hardly so hard a heart

In the breast of a man who has taken
his part

In the world, and has little children
around his knees,

But is filled with great love for them as
Thou art for these,

And would give up all for their good,
and is vexed day and night

With fatherly doubts and fears and
yearnings for right,

And grows sick, if evil come nigh them
body or soul,

And yet is but a feeble thing, without
strength or control.

But Thou art almighty for good ; yet
Thy plagues, they come,

Hunger and want and disease, in a
terrible sum ;

And the poor fathers waste, and are
stricken with slow decay ;

And the children fall sick, and are
starving, day after day ;

And the hospital wards are choked ;
and the fire and the flood

Vex men still, and the leaguered cities
are red with blood.

Ay, yet not the less, O Lord,

I know Thou art just and art good in-
deed.

This is it that doth perplex my thought,
So that I rest not content in any creed.

If I knew that Thou wert the Lord of
Ill,

Then were I untouched still,

And, if I would, might worship at Thy
shrine ;

Or if my mind might prove no Will
Divine

Inspired the dull mechanical reign of
Law.

But now, while Thou art surely, and
art good,

And wouldst Thy creatures have in
happiness,

Always the sword, the plague prevail
no less,

Not less, not less Thy laws are based
in blood.

And such deep inequalities of lot

Confuse our thought, as if Thy hand
were not.

All blessings, health and wealth and
honours spent

On some unworthy sordid instrument ;

Thy highest gift of genius flung away

On some vile thing of meanest clay,

Who fouls the ingrate lips, touched
 with Thy fire,
 With worse than common mire :
 How should I fail alone, when all things
 groan,
 To let my weak voice take a pleading
 tone !
 How should I speak a comfortable
 word
 When such things are, O Lord ! ”

This is the cry that goes up for ever
 To Heaven from weak and striving
 souls :
 But the calm Voice makes answer to
 them never ;
 The undelaying chariot onward rolls.

But another voice : “ O Lord of all, I
 bless Thee,
 I bless Thee and give thanks for all.
 Thou hast kept me from my childhood
 up,
 Thou hast not let me fall.
 All the fair days of my youth
 Thou wast beside, me and Thy truth.
 I bless Thee that Thou didst withhold
 The blight of fame, the curse of gold ;
 Because Thou hast spared my soul as
 yet,
 Amid the wholesome toil of each swift
 day,
 The tumult and the fret
 Which carry worldly lives from Thee
 away.
 I thank Thee for the sorrows Thou hast
 sent,
 Being in all things content
 To see in every loss a greater gain,
 A joy in every pain ;
 The losses I have known, since still I
 know
 Lives, hidden with Thee, are and grow.

I do not know, I cannot tell,
 How it may be, yet death and pain are
 well :

I know that Thou art good and mild,
 Though sickness take and break the
 helpless child ;

’Twas Thou, none else, that gav’st the
 mother’s love,

And even her anguish came from Thee
 above.

I am content to be that which Thou
 wilt :

Tho’ humble be my pathway and ob-
 scure,

Yet from all stain of guilt

Keep Thou me pure.

Or if Thy evil still awhile must find
 Its seat within my mind,

Be it as Thou wilt, I am not afraid.

And for the world Thy hand has made,
 Thy beautiful world, so wondrous fair :
 Thy mysteries of dawn, Thy cloudless
 days ;

Thy mountains, soaring high through
 Thy pure air ;

Thy glittering sea, sounding perpetual
 praise ;

Thy starlit skies, whence worlds un-
 numbered gaze ;

Thy earth, which in Thy bounteous
 summer-tide

Is clad in flowery robes and glorified ;
 Thy still primeval forests, deeply stirred

By Thy great winds as by an unknown
 word ;

Thy fair, light-winged creatures, blithe
 and free ;

Thy dear brutes living, dying, silently :
 Shall I from them no voice to praise
 Thee find ?

Thy praise is hymned by every balmy
 wind

That wanders o'er a wilderness of
flowers ;
By every happy brute which asks not
why,
But rears its brood and is content to die.
From Thee has come whatever good is
ours ;—
The gift of love that doth exalt the
race ;
The gift of childhood with its nameless
grace ;
The gift of age which slow through ripe
decay,
Like some fair fading sunset dies away ;
The gift of homes happy with honest
wealth,
And fair lives flowering in unbroken
health,—
All these are Thine, and the good gifts
of brain,
Which to heights greater than the earth
can gain,
And can our little minds project to
Thee,
Through Infinite Space—across Eter-
nity.
For these I praise Thy name ; but
above all
The precious gifts Thy bounteous hand
lets fall,
I praise Thee for the power to love the
Right,
Though Wrong awhile show fairer to
the sight ;
The power to sin, the dreadful power
to choose
The evil portion and the good re-
fuse ;
And last, when all the power of ill is
spent,
The power to seek Thy face and to
repent."

This is the answering cry that goes for
ever
To Heaven from blest untroubled souls :
But the calm Voice makes answer to
them never ;
The undelaying chariot onward rolls.

LOOK OUT, O LOVE.

LOOK out, O Love, across the sea :
A soft breeze fans the summer night,
The low waves murmur lovingly,
And lo ! the beacon's fitful light.

Some day perchance, when I am gone,
And muse by far-off tropic seas,
You may be gazing here alone,
On starlit waves and skies like these.

Or perhaps together, you and I,
Rapt each in each, no other by,
Shall watch again that fitful flame,
And know that we are not the same.

Or maybe we shall come no more,
But prisoned on some unknown shore,
In dreams shall see that light again,
And hear that starlit sea complain.

CLYTÆMNESTRA IN PARIS.

I SEEMED to pace the dreadful corridors
Of a still foreign prison, blank and
white,
And in a bare and solitary cell
To find a lonely woman, soft of voice
And mild of eye, who never till life's
end
Should pass those frowning gates. Me-
thought I asked her

The story of her crime, and what hard
fate
Left her, so gentle seeming, fettered
there,
Hopeless, a murderess at whose very
name
Men shuddered still. And to my ques-
tioning
Methought that dreadful soul made
answer thus :

“ Yes, I suppose I liked him, though I
know not ;
I hardly know what love may be ; how
should I ?—

I a young girl wedded without my will,
As is our custom here, to a man old,
Not perhaps in years, but dark expe-
riences.

What had we two in common, that
worn man,

And I, an untrained girl ? It was not
strange

If when that shallow boy, with his bold
tongue,

And his gay eyes, and curls, and bud-
ding beard,

Flattered me, I was weak. I think all
women

Are weak sometimes, and overprone to
love

When the man is young, and straight,
and 'twas a triumph

To see the disappointed envious jades
Wince as he passed them carelessly,
nor heeded

Their shallow wiles to trap him,—ay,
a triumph !

And that was all ; I hardly know, in-
deed,

If it was love that drove, or only pride
To hold what others grudged me. Vain
he was,

And selfish, and a coward, as you shall
hear.

Handsome enough, I grant you, to
betray

A stronger soul than mine. Indeed, I
think,

He never cared for me nor I for him
(For there were others after him) : I
knew it,

Then chiefest, when our comedy of life
Was turning at the last to tragedy.

“ Now that I was unfaithful, a false
wife,

I value not men's sneers at a pin's
point,

We have a right to love and to be
loved ;

Not the mere careless tolerance of the
spouse

Who has none to give. True, if I were
a nun,

Vowed to a white and cloistered life, no
doubt

'Twere otherwise. They tell me there
are women

Who are so rapt by thoughts of the
poor, of churches,

Of public ends, of charity, of schools,
Of Heaven knows what, they live their

lives untouched
By passion ; but for us, who are but

women,
Not bred on moonlight, made of

common clay,
Untrained for aught but common bour-
geois life,

Life is no mystical pale procession
winding

Its way from the cradle to the grave, but
rather

A thing of hot swift flushes, fierce de-
lights,

Good eating, dances, wines, and all the
rest,
When the occasion comes. I never
loved him,
I tell you ; therefore, maybe, did no
sin.

“ But when this fellow must presume to
boast,
Grow cold, have scruples for his soul
and mine,
And turn to other younger lives, and
pass
My door to-day with this one, then with
that,
And all the gossips of the quarter
sneered,
And knew I was deserted, do you think
it

A wonder that my eyes, opened at last,
Saw all the folly and the wickedness
(If sweet it were, where were the
wickedness?)

Which bore such bitter fruit? Think
you it strange

That I should turn for aid, ay, and re-
venge,

To my wronged spouse—if wronged he
be, indeed,

Who doth consent as he did? When I
told him,

Amid my tears, he made but small
pretence

Of jealousy at all ; only his pride
Was perhaps a little wounded. And
indeed

It took such long confessions, such
grave pain

Of soul, such agony of remorse of
mine

To move him but a little, that I grew
So weary of it all, it almost checked
My penitence, and left me free to choose

Another for my love ; but at the last,
Long labour, feigned reports, the
neighbours' sneers,
These drove him at the last, good easy
man,
To such a depth of hatred, that my
task
Grew lighter, and my heart.

He bade me write
Loving appeals, recalling our past
days

Together ; and I wrote them, using all
The armoury of loving cozening words
With which craft arms us women : but
in vain,

For whether some new love engrossed,
or whether

He wearied of me and my love, I know
not,

Only, in spite of all, no answer came.

“ At length, since I could get no word
from him,

My husband bade me write—or was
it I

Who thought of the device? Pray
you believe me,

I would speak nothing else than the
whole truth,

But these sad dreadful deeds confuse
the brain.

Well, perhaps 'twas I, who knew his
weakness well ;

I do not know, but somehow it came to
pass

I wrote a crafty letter, begging of him,
By all our former kindness, former
wrong,

If for the last time, recognizing well
That all was done between us ever-
more,

We might, for one last evening, meet
and part.

And, knowing he was needy, and his
greed,—

‘If only he would come,’ I wrote to
him,

‘I had some secret savings, and
desired—

For what need comes there closer than
a friend’s?—

To help him in his trouble.’

Swift there came—
The viper!—hypocritical words of love:
Yes, he would come, for the old love
still lived,

He knew it, ah, too well; not all the
glamour

Of other eyes and lips could ever quench
The fire of that mad passion. He
would come,

Loving as ever, longing for the day.

“Now when we had the answer,
straight we three—

My husband and myself, and his weak
brother,

Whose daughter to her first communion
went

That very day,—and I, too, took the
Host

As earnest of changed life,—we three,
I say,

At a little feast we made to celebrate
The brothers reconciled (in families
There come dissensions, as you know),
devised

His punishment. We hired, in a still
suburb,

A cottage standing backward from the
street,

Beyond an avenue of sycamores;

A lonely place, unnoticed. Day by
day

We went, we three together—for I
feared

Lest, if there were no third, the strength
of youth

Might bear my husband down—we
went to make

All needful preparations. First we
spread

Over all the floor a colour like to blood,
For deep’s the stain of blood, and what
shall cleanse it?

Also, my husband, from a neighbour-
ing wood,

Had brought a boar-trap, sharp with
cruel knives

And jagged teeth, to close with a snap
and tear

The wild beast caught within it. But
I deemed

The risk too great, the prey might slip
away;

Therefore, that he might meet his
punishment,

And to prevent the sound of cries and
groans,

My husband fashioned for his lips a
gag,

And on the mantel left it, and the
means

To strike a light. And being thus
prepared,

We three returned to Paris; there long
time

We sate eating and drinking of the
best,

As those do who have taken a resolve
Whence no escape is, save to do and
die.

“Then the two men went back and
left me there,

With all my part to do. It was an
hour

Or more before the time when my poor
dupe

Had fixed to meet me. Wandering
 thus alone
 Through the old streets, seeing the
 common sights
 Of every day, the innocent child-faces
 Homing from school, so like my little
 ones,
 I seemed to lose all count of time. At
 length,
 Because it was the Ascension Feast,
 there came
 A waft of music from the open doors
 Of a near church, and, entering in, I
 found
 The incensed air, all I remembered
 well—
 The lights, the soaring chants, the
 kneeling crowds,
 When I believed and knelt. They
 seemed to soothe
 My half bewildered fancy, and I
 thought—
 What if a woman, who mayhap had
 sinned
 But lightly, wishing to repair her
 wrong,
 And bound thereby to some dark daring
 deed
 Of peril, should come here, and kneel
 awhile,
 And ask a blessing for the deed, of
 her
 Who is Heaven's Queen and knows our
 weaknesses,
 Being herself a woman ! So I knelt
 In worship, and the soaring voices
 clear
 And the dim heights and suffrage-laden
 air
 Filled me with comfort for my soul, and
 nerved
 My failing heart, and winged time's
 lagging flight,

Till lo the hour was come when I
 should go
 To meet him for the last time.

“ When we left
 The city far behind, the sweet May
 night
 Was falling on the quiet village street ;
 There was a scent of hawthorn on the
 air
 As we passed on with feint of loving
 words,—
 Passed slow like lovers to the appointed
 place,
 Passed to the place of punishment and
 doom.

“ But when we reached the larkling
 avenue
 Of sycamores, which to the silent
 house
 Led through a palpable gloom, I felt
 him shudder
 With some blind vague presentiment
 of ill,
 And he would go no further; but I
 clung
 Around him close, laughed all his fear
 to scorn,
 Whispered words in his ear, and step
 by step,
 My soul on reparation being bent,
 Drew him reluctant to the fated door
 Where lay my spouse in ambush, and
 swift death.

“ I think I hear the dreadful noise of
 the key,
 Turning within the disused lock, the
 hall
 Breathing a false desertion, the loud
 sound

Of both our footsteps echoing through
the house.

I could not choose but tremble. Yet
I knew

'Twas but a foolish weakness. Then
I struck

A match, and in the burst of sudden
light

I saw the ruddy cheek grown ashy
pale,

And as he doffed his hat, I marked the
curls

On his white forehead, and the boyish
grace

Which hung around him still, and al-
most felt

Compassion. Then the darkness came
again,

And hid him, and I groped to find his
hand,

Clutched it with mine, and led him to
the door.

“But when within the darkling room
we were

Where swift death waited him, not
dalliance,

Three times my trembling fingers failed
to wake

The twinkling light which scarce could
pierce the gloom

Which hid my husband. Oh, to see
his face

When the dark aspect and the furious
eyes

Glared out on him ! ‘I am lost !’ he
cried, ‘I am lost !’

And then the sound of swift and
desperate fight

And a death struggle. Listening, as I
stood

Without, with that mean craven hound,
our brother,

I heard low cries of rage, and knew
despair

And youth had nerved the unarmed in
such sort

As made the conflict doubtful. Then
I rushed

Between them, threw my arms around
him, clogged

His force and held him fast, crying the
while,

‘Wretch, would you kill my husband !’
—held him fast,

As coils a serpent round the escaping
deer,

Until my husband, hissing forth his
hate,

‘Villain, I pierce thy heart as thou
hast mine,’

Stabbed through and through his heart.

“But oh, but oh

The lonely road, beneath the dreadful
stars !

To the swift stream, we three—nay,
nay, we four—

One on the child’s poor carriage
covered o’er,

And three who drew him onward, on
the road,

That dead thing, having neither eye
nor ear,

Which late was full of life, and strife,
and hate.

On that dumb silence, came no way-
farer,

And once the covering which concealed
our load

Slipped down, and left the ghastly
blood-stained thing

Open to prying eyes, but none were
there ;

And then the darkling river, and the
sound

When, with lead coiled around it, the
dead corpse
Sank with a sullen plunge within the
deep,
And took with it the tokens of our crime.

“Then with a something of relief, as
those

Who have passed through some great
peril all unharmed,
We went and burned the blood-stained
signs of death,

And left the dreadful place, and once
more sped

To Paris and to sleep, till the new day,
Now risen to high noon, touched our
sad dreams.

“And that day, since we could not
work as yet,

We to the Picture Gallery went, and
there

We took our fill of nude voluptuous
limbs,

Mingled with scenes of horror bathed
in blood,

Such as our painters love. So week
by week,

Careless and unafraid, we spent our
days,

Till when that sad night faded; swift
there rose,

Bursting the weights that kept it, the
pale corpse,

A damning witness from the deep, and
brought

The dreadful past again, and with it
doom.

“You know how we were tried, and
how things went,

The cozening speeches, the brow-beat-
ing judge,

The petty crafts which make the
pleader's art,

The dolts who sit in judgment, when
the one

Who knows all must be silent; but you
know not

The intolerable burden of suspense,
The hard and hateful gaze of hungry
eyes

Which gloat upon your suffering. When
doom came

It was well to know the worst, and
hear no more

The half-forgotten horrors. But I
think

The sense of common peril, common
wrong,

Knits us in unity indissoluble,
Closer than years of converse. When
my husband,

Braving his doom, embraced me as he
went:

‘Wife, so thou live I care not,’ all my
heart

Went out to him for a moment, and I
cried,

‘Let me die too, my guilt is more than
his.’

“Some quibble marred the sentence,
and once more

The miserable tale was told afresh:
Once more I stood before those hungry
eyes,

And when ’twas done we went forth
slaves for life,

Both with an equal doom, and ever since
We suffer the same pains in solitude,
Slaves fettered fast, whom only death
sets free.

“That is my tale told truly. Now you
know,

Sir, of what fashion I am made : a woman	Down that dark passage, and I seem to see
Gentle, you see, and mild eyed. If I sinned	The dreadful stare of those despairing eyes,
Surely there was temptation, and I sought	And then there sounds, a plunge in the deep, and I
Such reparation as I could. There are here	Lie shivering till the dawn. I have no comfort,
Tigresses, and not women, black of brow	Except the holy Mass ; for see you, sir,
And strong of arm, who have struck down or stabbed	I was devout until they scoffed at me. And now I know there is a hell indeed,
Husband, or child, or lover, not as I, But driven by rage and jealousy, and drink,	Since this place is on earth. I do not think
These creatures of the devil, as I pass I see them shrink and shudder. The young priest	I have much cause to fear death, should it come ;
Of the prison, a well-favoured lad he is,	For whoso strives for Duty, all the Saints
When I confessed to him bore on his brow	And the Madonna needs must love, and I,
Cold drops of agony ; the Sister grew So pale at what I told her, that I thought	I have done what penitence could do ; and here
She was like to swoon away, until I soothed her.	What have I of reward ?—my children taken
Poor wretch, she has much to learn ; and here I am,	As clean from me as if they were dead indeed,
And shall be till my hair turns grey, my eyes	Trained to forget their mother. Sir, I see,
Grow dim, and I have clean forgotten all	Beyond these shallow phantasms of life ;
That brought me here, and all my former life	And this I hold, that one whose con- science shows
Fades like a once-heard tale. In the long nights,	As clear as mine must needs be justified.
As I lie alone in my cell like any nun,	I love the holy Mass, and take the Host
I wake sometimes with a start, and seem to hear	As often as I may, being of good heart.
That rusty lock turn, and those echoing feet	For what was it she did in Holy Writ, The Kenite's wife of old? I do not read
	That women shrunk from her because she drave

The nail through her guest's brain ;
 nay, rather, praise
 Was hers : yet was she not betrayed
 as I,
 Nor yet repentant of her wrong and
 seeking
 To do what good was left. But look
 you, sir,
 If I was once repentant, that is past :
 I hate those black-browed women, who
 turn from me,
 That smooth priest and that poor fool
 with her cross,
 And that strange pink-and-whiteness
 of the nun.
 And sometimes when they come I let
 them hear
 Such things as make the pious hypocrites
 turn
 And cross themselves. And for that
 tigress crew,
 If I might only steal to their cells at
 night
 With a knife, I would teach them,
 what it is to stab ;
 Or even without one, that these little
 hands
 Can strangle with the best.
 Ah, you draw back,
 You too are shocked forsooth. Listen,
 you wretch,
 Who are walking free while I am
 prisoned here :
 How many thoughts of murder have
 you nursed
 Within your miserable heart ! how
 many
 Low, foul desires which would degrade
 the brute !
 Do you think I do not know you men ?
 What was it
 That kept your hands unstained, but
 accident ?—

Accident, did I say ? or was it rather
 Cowardice, that you feared the stripes
 of the law,
 And did not dare to do your will or
 die ?—
 Accident ! then, I pray you, where the
 merit
 To have abstained ? Or if you claim,
 indeed,
 Such precious self-restraint as keeps
 your feet
 From straying, where the credit ? since
 it came
 A gift as much unearned as other's ill,
 Which lurked for them a little tiny
 speck
 Hidden in the convolutions of the
 brain,
 To grow with their growth, and wax
 with their years, and leave
 The wretch at last in Hell. Do you
 deem it just,
 The Potter with our clay upon His
 wheel
 Should shape it in such form ? I love
 not God,
 Being such ; I hate Him rather : I,
 His creature,
 I do impugn His justice or His power,
 I will not feign obedience—I, a
 woman,
 Of a soft nature, who would love my
 love,
 And my child, and nothing more ; who
 am, instead,
 A murderess, as they tell me, pining
 here
 In hell before my time."

 Even as she spake
 I seemed to be again as when I saw
 The murderess of old time ; and once
 again

Within that modern prison, blank and
white,
There came the viewless trouble in the
air
Which took her, and the sweep of
wings unseen,
And terrible sounds which swooped on
her and hushed
Her voice and seemed to occupy her
soul
With horror and despair; and as I
passed
The crucifix within the corridor,
“How long?” I cried, “How long?”

PICTURES—III.

THE sad slow dawn of winter; frozen
trees
And trampled snow within a lonely
wood;
One shrouded form, which to the city
flees;
And one, a masquer, lying in his
blood.

A full sun blazing with unclouded day,
Till the bright waters mingle with the
sky;
And on the dazzling verge, uplifted
high;
White sails mysterious slowly pass
away.

Hidden in a trackless and primæval
wood,
Long-buried temples of an unknown
race,

And one colossal idol; on its face
A changeless sneer, blighting the
solitude.

A fair girl half undraped, who blithely
sings;
Her white robe poised upon one budd-
ing breast;
While at her side, invisible, uncon-
fessed,
Love folds her with the shelter of his
wings.

Black clouds embattled on a lurid sky,
And one keen flash, like an awakened
soul,
Piercing the hidden depths, while
momently
One waits to hear enormous thunders
roll.

Two helpless girls upon a blazing wall,
The keen flames leaping always high
and higher;
But faster, faster than the hungry fire,
Brave hearts which climb to save them
ere they fall.

A youthful martyr, looking to the skies
From rack and stake, from torment and
disgrace;
And suddenly heaven opened to his
eyes,
A beckoning hand, a tender heavenly
face.

A home on a fair English hill ; away
Stretch undulating plains, now gold
 now green,
With park and lake and glade, and
 homestead grey ;
And crowning all, the blue sea dimly
 seen.

A lifeless, voiceless, world of age-long
 snow,
Where winter crawls on slow through
 endless night,
And safe within a low hut's speck of
 light,
Strong souls alert and hopeful, by the
 glow.

A great ship forging slowly from the
 shore,
And on the broad deck weeping figures
 bent ;
And on the gliding pierhead, sorrow-
 spent,
Those whom the voyagers shall see no
 more.

CONFESSION.

WHO is there but at times has seen,
While his past days before him stand,
In all the chances which have been,
The guidance of a hidden Hand,

Which still has ruled his growing life,
Through weal and woe, through joy
 and pain,
Through fancied good, through useless
 strife,
And empty pleasure sought in vain ;

Which often has withheld the meed
He longed for once, with yearnings
 blind,
And given the truest prize indeed,
The harvest of a blessed mind

And so accepts the common lot
Content, whate'er the Ruler would,
Since all that has been, or has not,
Springs from a hidden root of good ?

* * * *

Yet some there are maybe to-day,
Whose childhood at the mother's knee
Was taught to bow itself and pray,
Nor ever thirsted to be free,

Who now, 'mid warring voices loud,
Have lost the faith they held before,
Nor through the jangling of the crowd
Can hear the earlier message more.

A brute Fate vexes them, the reign
Of dumb laws, speeding onward still,
Regardless of the waste and pain,
Which all the labouring earth do fill.

They look to see the rule of Right ;
They find it not, and in its stead
But slow survivals, born of Might,
And all the early Godhead dead ;

They see it not, and droop and faint
And are unhappy, doubting God ;
Yet every step their feet have trod
Was trodden before them by a saint.

* * * *

Oh, doubting soul, look up, behold
The eternal heavens above thy head,
The solid earth beneath, its mould
Compacted of the unnumbered dead.

Here the eternal problems grow,
And with each day are solved and done,

When some spent life, like melting
snow,
Breathes forth its essence to the sun.

As death is, life is—without end;
Wrong with right mingles, joy with
pain;
Forbid two meeting streams to blend,
'Twere not more hopeless, nor more
vain.

Though Death with Life, though Wrong
with Right,
Are bound within the scheme of things,
Yet can our souls, on soaring wings,
Gain to a loftier purer height,

Where death is not, nor any life,
Nor right nor wrong, nor joy nor pain;
But changeless Being, lacking strife,
Doth through all change, unchanged
remain.

Should Wrong prevail o'er all the
earth,
'Twere nought if only we discern
The one great truth, which if we learn,
All else beside is little worth.

That Right, is that which must prevail,
If not here, there, if not now, then,
Is the one Truth which shall not fail,
For all the doubts and fears of men.

What if a myriad ages still
Of wrong and pain, of waste and blood,
Confuse our thought, triumphant Good
At length, at last, our souls can fill

With such assurance as the Voice
Which from the fiery mountain pealed,
And bade the kneeling hosts rejoice
That God was in His laws revealed.

Nay even might our thought conceive
The final victory of Ill,
Not so, were it folly to believe
That Right is higher, purer still.

Who knows the Eternal "Ought"
knows well
That whoso loves and seeks the Right,
For him God shines with changeless
light,
Ay, to the lowest deeps of Hell.

And whoso knoweth God indeed,
The fixed foundations of his creed
Know neither changing nor decay,
Though all creation pass away.

LOVE UNCHANGED.

My love, my love, if I were old,
My body bent, my blood grown cold,
With thin white hairs upon my brow,
Say wouldst thou think of me as now?
Wouldst thou cling to me still,
As down life's sloping hill
We came at last through the unresting
years?

Art thou prepared for tears,
For time's sure-coming losses,
For life's despites and crosses,
My love, my love?

Ah! brief our little, little day;
Ah! years that fleet so fast away;
Before our summer scarce begun,
Look, spring and blossom-tide are
done!

When all things hasten past,
How should love only last?
How should our souls alone unchanged
remain?—
Come pleasure or come pain,

In days of joy and gladness,
In years of grief and sadness,
Love shall be love !

AT THE END.

WHEN the five gateways of the soul
Are closing one by one,
When our being's currents slowly roll
And day is done,
What shall our chiefest comfort be
Amid this misery ?

Not to have stores heaped up on high
Of gold and precious things,
Not to have flown from sky to sky
On Fame's wide wings,—
These things a little space do last,
And then are overpast.

Nor to have worked with patient brain
In senate or in mart,
To have gained the meed which those
attain

Who have played their part,—
Effort is fair, success is sweet,
But leave life incomplete.

Nor to have said, as the fool says,
"Be merry, soul, rejoice ;
"Thou hast laid up store for many days."

Oh, foolish voice !
Already at thy gate the feet
Of the corpse-bearers meet.

Nor to have heaped up precious store
Of all the gains of time,
Of long-dead sages' treasured lore,
Or deathless rhyme,—
Though Learning be a comely maid,
Death maketh her afraid.

Nor to have drained the cup of youth,
To the sweet maddening lees ;
Nor, rapt by dreams of Hidden Truth,
To have spurned all these ;—
Pleasure, Denial, touch not him
Whose body and mind are dim.

Not one of all these things shall I
For comfort use, or strength,
When the sure hour, when I must die,
Takes me at length ;
One thought alone shall bring redress
For that great heaviness :—

That I have held each struggling soul
As of one kin and blood,
That one sure link doth all control
To one close brotherhood ;
For who the race of men doth love,
Loves also Him above.

THREE BRETON POEMS.

I.

THE ORPHAN GIRL OF
LANNION.

IN seventeen hundred and eighty-three,
To Lannion came dole and misery.

Mignon an orphan, as good as fair,
Served in the little hostelry there.

One darkling night, when the hour was
late,
Two travellers rang at the outer gate.

"Quick, hostess ! supper, red wine,
and food ;
We have money to pay, so that all be
good."

When they had drunken enough, and
more,

"Here is white money to pay the score.

"And now shall your little serving-
maid come,

With her lantern lighted, to guide us
home."

"Gentles, in all our wide Brittany
There is no man would harm her, so let
it be."

Forth went the maid, full of innocent
pride,

Fearless and free, with her light by her
side.

* * * *

When they were far on their lonely
way,

They began to whisper, and mutter,
and say,

"Little maid, your face is as fair and
bright

As the foam on the wave in the morn-
ing light."

"Gentles, I pray you, flatter me not :
It is as God made it—no other, God
wot ;

"And were it fairer, I tell you true—
Ay, a hundred times fairer—'twere
nought to you."

"To judge, little maid, by your sober
speech,

You know all the good priests at the
school can teach ;

"To judge from your accents, discreet
and mild,

You were bred in the convent cloister,
my child."

"No teacher had I, neither priest nor
nun ;

There was no one to teach me on earth,
not one.

"But while by my father's poor hearth
I wrought,

God filled me with many a holy
thought."

"Set down your lantern and put out
the light.

Here is gold : none can help you, 'tis
dead of night."

"Good sirs ! for my brother the young
priest's sake ;

If he heard such sayings his heart would
break."

* * * *

"Oh, plunge me down fathoms deep in
the sea,

Of your mercy, rather than this thing
be !

"Rather than this—'twere a lighter
doom—

Oh bury me quick in a living tomb !"

* * * *

The motherly hostess, sore afraid,
Waited in vain for her little maid.

She watched by the chill hearth's flicker-
ing light

Till the bell tolled twice through the
black dead night.

Then cried, "Up, serving-men, sleep
no more !

Help !—little maid Mignon lies drowned
in gore."

* * * *

By the cross she lay dead, in the dead
cold night,
But beside her her lantern was still
alight !

II.

THE FOSTER BROTHER.

Of all the noble damsels, in all our
Brittany,
Gwennola was the sweetest far, a maiden
fair to see.

Scarce eighteen summers shed their
gold upon her shapely head,
Yet all who loved the fair girl best were
numbered with the dead—

Her father and her mother, and eke
her sisters dear.
Ah ! Mary, pity 'twas to see her shed
the bitter tear

At her casement in the castle, where a
step-dame now bare sway,
Her dim eyes fixed upon the sea, which
glittered far away.

* * * *

For three long years she watched in
vain, in dole and misery,
To see her foster brother's sail rise up
from under sea ;

For three long years she watched in
vain, hoping each day would send
The only heart which beat to hers, her
lover and her friend.

"Go, get you gone and tend the kine,"
the cruel step-dame said ;
"Leave brooding over long-past years :
go, earn your daily bread."

She woke her, ere the darkling dawns,
while yet 'twas dead of night,
To sweep the floors and cleanse the
house, and set the fires alight ;

To fetch the water from the brook,
again and yet again,
With heavy toil and panting breath,
and young form bent in twain.

* * * *

One darkling winter morning, before
the dawning light,
With ringing hoofs, across the brook
there rode a noble knight :

"Good morrow, gracious maiden, and
art thou free to wed ?"
And she, so young she was and meek,
"I know not, sir," she said.

"I prithee tell me, maiden, if thou art
fancy-free ?"

"To none, sir, have I plighted yet my
maiden troth," said she.

"Then take, fair maid, this ring of
gold, and to your step-dame say,
That to-day your troth is plighted to a
knight from far away ;

"That at Nantes a battle fierce was
fought, wherein his squire was
slain,
And he himself lies stricken sore upon
his bed of pain ;

"But when three weeks are overpast,
whatever fate betide,
He will come himself full gaily, and
claim thee for his bride."

Affrighted ran she to her home, when,
lo, a wondrous thing !
For on her slender finger blazed her
foster brother's ring.

II.

The weeks crept onward slowly, crept
slowly—one, two, three ;
But never came the young knight, no
never more came he.

"Come, it is time that you were wed,
for I have sought for you
A bridegroom fitted to your rank, an
honest man and true."

"Nay, nay, I prithee, step-dame, there
is none that I can wed,
Only my foster brother dear I love,
alive or dead.

"With this ring his troth he plighted,
and whatever fate betide,
He will come himself full gaily, and
claim me for his bride."

"Peace, with thy golden wedding-ring !
peace, fool, or I will teach
With blows thy senseless chattering
tongue to hold discreeter speech ;

"To-morrow thou shalt be the bride,
whether thou wilt or not,
Of Giles the neat-herd, honest man :
ay, this shall be thy lot."

"Of Giles the neat-herd, saidst thou ?
oh, I shall die of pain !
Oh mother, dear dead mother, that thou
wert in life again !"

"Go, cry and wail without the house ;
go, feed on misery :
Go, take thy fill of moans and tears, for
wedded thou shalt be."

III.

Just then the ancient sexton, with the
bell that tolls the dead,
Went up and down the country side,
and these the words he said :—

"Pray for the soul of one who was a
brave and loyal knight,
Who bare at Nantes a grievous hurt,
what time they fought the fight :

"To-morrow eve, at set of sun, amid
the gathering gloom,
From the white church they bear him
forth, to rest within the tomb."

IV.

"Thou art early from the wedding
feast !" "Good truth, I could
not stay ;
I dared not see the piteous sight, and
therefore turned away ;

"I could not bear the pity and the
horror in her eyne,
As she stood so fair, in blank despair,
within the sacred shrine.

"Around the hapless maiden, all were
weeping bitterly,
And the good old rector at the church,
a heavy heart had he ;

"Not a dry eye was around her, save
the step-dame stern alone,
Who looked on with an evil smile, as
from a heart of stone ;

"And when the ringers rang a peal, as
now they came again,
And the women whispered comfort, yet
her heart seemed rent in twain.

"High in the place of honour at the
marriage feast she sate,
Yet no drop of water drank she, and
no crumb of bread she ate ;

"And when at last, the feast being
done, they would light the bride
to bed,
The ring from off her hand she flung,
the wreath from off her head,

"And with wild eyes that spoke de-
spair, and locks that streamed
behind,
Into the darkling night she fled, as
swiftly as the wind."

v.

The lights within the castle were out,
and all asleep ;
Only, with fever in her brain, the maid
would watch and weep.

The chamber door swung open. "Who
goes there ?" "Do not fear,
Gwen ; 'tis I, your foster brother."
"Oh ! at last, my love, my
dear !"

He raised her to the saddle, and his
strong arm clasped her round,
As, through the night, his charger white
flew on without a sound.

"How fast we go, my brother !"
"'Tis a hundred leagues and
more."

"How happy am I, happier than in all
my life before !

"And have we far to go, brother ? I
would that we were come."

"Have patience, sister ; hold me fast ;
'tis a long way to our home."

The white owl shrieked around them,
the wild things shrank in fear
As through the night a cloud of light
that ghostly steed drew near.

"How swift your charger is, brother !
and your armour oh, how bright !
Ah, no more you are a boy, brother,
but in troth a noble knight !

"How beautiful you are, brother ! but
I would that we were come."

"Have patience, sister ; hold me fast ;
we are not far from home."

"Your breath is icy-cold, brother, your
locks are dank and wet ;
Your heart, your hands are icy-cold ;
oh ! is it further yet ?"

"Have patience, sister ; hold me fast ;
for we are nearly there ;
Hist ! hear you not our marriage bells
ring through the midnight air ?"

Even with the word, that ghostly steed
neighed suddenly and shrill,
Then trembled once through every limb,
and like a stone stood still.

* * * *

And lo, within a land they were, a land
of mirth and pleasure,
Where youths and maidens hand in
hand danced to a joyous mea-
sure ;

A verdant orchard closed them round
 with golden fruit bedight,
 And above them, from the heaven-
 kissed hills, came shafts of golden
 light ;

Hard by, a cool spring bubbled clear,
 a fountain without stain,
 Whereof the dead lips tasting, grew
 warm with life again.

There was Gwennola's mother mild,
 and eke her sisters dear :
 Oh, land of joy and bliss and love !—
 oh, land without a tear !

VI.

But when the next sun on the earth,
 brake from the gathered gloom,
 From the white church, the young
 maids bore, the virgin to her
 tomb.

III.

AZENOR.

"SEAMEN, seamen, tell me true,
 Is there any of your crew
 Who in Armor town has seen
 Azenor the kneeling queen ?"

"We have seen her oft indeed,
 Kneeling in the self-same place ;
 Brave her heart, though pale her face,
 White her soul, though dark her weed."

I.

Of a long-past summer's day
 Envoys came from far away,
 Mailed in silver, clothed with gold,
 Hh on snorting chargers bold.

When the warder spied them near,
 To the King he went, and cried,
 "Twelve bold knights come pricking
 here :

Shall I open to them wide ?"

"Opened let the great gates be ;
 See the knights are welcomed all ;
 Spread the board and deck the hall,
 We will feast them royally."

"By our Prince's high command,
 Who one day shall be our King,
 We come to ask a precious thing—
 Azenor your daughter's hand."

"Gladly will we grant your prayer :
 Brave the youth, as we have heard.
 Tall is she, milkwhite and fair,
 Gentle as a singing bird."

Fourteen days high feast they made,
 Fourteen days of dance and song ;
 Till the dawn the harpers played ;
 Mirth and joyance all day long.

"Now, my fair spouse, it is meet
 That we turn us toward our home."
 "As you will, my love, my sweet ;
 Where you are, there I would come."

II.

When his step-dame saw the bride,
 Well-nigh choked with spleen was she :
 "This pale-faced girl, this lump of
 pride—
 And shall she be preferred to me ?

"New things please men best, 'tis true,
 And the old are cast aside.
 Natheless, what is old and tried
 Serves far better than the new."

Scarce eight months had passed away
When she to the Prince would come,
And with subtlety would say,
"Would you lose both wife and
home ?

"Have a care, lest what I tell
Should befall you ; it were best
To have a care and guard you well,
'Ware the cuckoo in your nest."

"Madam, if the truth you tell,
Meet reward her crime shall earn,
First the round tower's straitest cell,
Then in nine days she shall burn."

III.

When the old King was aware,
Bitter tears the greybeard shed.
Tore in grief his white, white hair,
Crying, "Would God that I were dead."

And to all the seamen said,
"Good seamen, pray you tell me true,
Is there, then, any one of you
Can tell me if my child be dead ?"

"My liege, as yet alive is she,
Though burned to-morrow shall she be :
But from her prison tower, O King !
Morning and eve we hear her sing.

"Morning and eve, from her fair throat
Issues the same sweet plaintive note,
'They are deceived ; I kiss Thy rod :
Have pity on them, O my God !'"

IV.

Even as a lamb who gives its life
All meekly to the cruel knife,
White-robed she went, her soft feet
bare,
Self-shrouded in her golden hair.

And as she to her dreadful fate
Fared on, poor innocent, meek and
mild,

"Grave crime it were," cried small and
great,

"To slay the mother and the child."

All wept sore, both small and great ;
Only the step-dame smiling sate :

"Sure 'twere no evil deed, but good,
To kill the viper with her brood."

"Quick, good firemen, fan the fire
Till it leap forth fierce and red ;
Fan it fierce as my desire :
She shall burn till she is dead."

Vain their efforts, all in vain,
Though they fanned and fanned again ;
The more they blew, the embers gray
Faded and sank and died away.

When the judge the portent saw,
Dazed and sick with fear was he :
"She is a witch, she flouts the law ;
Come, let us drown her in the sea."

V.

What saw you on the sea ? A boat
Neither by sail nor oarsman sped ;
And at the helm, to watch it float,
An angel white with wings outspread

A little boat, far out to sea,
And with her child a fair ladye,
Whom at her breast she sheltered well,
Like a white dove upon a shell.

She kissed, and clasped, and kissed
again

His little back, his little feet,
Crooning a soft and tender strain,
"Da-da, my dear ; da-da, my sweet.

"Ah, could your father see you, sweet,
A proud man should he be to-day ;
But we on earth may never meet,
But he is lost and far away."

VI.

In Armor town is such affright
As never castle knew before,
For at the midmost hour of night
The wicked step-dame is no more.

"I see hell open at my side :
Oh, save me, in God's name, my
son !
Your spouse was chaste ; 'twas I who
lied ;
Oh, save me, for I am undone !"

Scarce had she checked her lying tongue,
A viper from her lips would glide,
With threatening fangs, which hissed
and stung,
And pierced her marrow till she died.

Eftsoons, to foreign realms the knight
Went forth, by land and over sea ;
Seeking in vain his lost knight,
O'er all the round, round world went
he.

He sought her East, he sought her
West,
Next to the hot South sped he forth,
Then, after many a fruitless quest,
He sought her in the gusty North.

There by some nameless island vast,
His anchor o'er the side he cast ;

When by a brooklet's fairy spray,
He spies a little lad at play.

Fair are his locks, and blue his eyes,
As his lost love's or as the sea ;
The good knight looking on them, sighs,
"Fair child, who may thy father be?"

"Sir, I have none save Him in heaven :
Long years ago he went away,
Ere I was born, and I am seven ;
My mother mourns him night and day."

"Who is thy mother, child, and
where?"

"She cleanses linen white and fair,
In yon clear stream." "Come, child,
and we

Together will thy mother see."

He took the youngling by the hand,
And, as they passed the yellow strand,
The child's swift blood in pulse and
arm

Leapt to his father's and grew warm.

"Rise up and look, oh mother dear ;
It is my father who is here :
My father who was lost is come—
Oh, bless God for it !—to his home."

They knelt and blessed His holy name,
Who is so good, and just, and mild,
Who joins the sire and wife and child :
And so to Brittany they came.

And may the blessed Trinity,
Protect all toilers on the sea !

GYCIA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PEOPLE OF BOSPHORUS.

The KING OF BOSPHORUS.

ASANDER, Prince of Bosphorus.

LYSIMACHUS, a statesman.

MEGACLES, a chamberlain from the Imperial Court of Constantinople.

Three Courtiers, accompanying Asander.

Soldiers, etc.

PEOPLE OF CHERSON.

LAMACHUS, Archon of the Republic of Cherson.

ZETHO, his successor.

THEODORUS, a young noble (brother to Irene), in love with Gycia.

BARDANES, first Senator.

Ambassador to Bosphorus.

The Senators of Cherson.

Two Labourers.

GYCIA, daughter of Lamachus.

IRENE, a lady—her friend, in love with Asander.

MELISSA, an elderly lady in waiting on Gycia.

Child, daughter of the Gaoler.

Citizens, etc.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—BOSPHORUS. THE KING'S PALACE.

*The KING, in anxious thought. To
him LYSIMACHUS, afterwards ASAN-
DER.*

Enter LYSIMACHUS.

Lys. What ails the King, that thus
his brow is bent
By such a load of care?
King. Lydimachus,
The load of empire lies a weary weight,

On age-worn brains; tho' skies and
seas may smile,
And steadfast favouring Fortune sit
serene,
Guiding the helm of State, but well
thou knowest—
None better in my realm—through
what wild waves,
Quicksands, and rock-fanged straits,
our Bosphorus,
Laden with all our love, reels madly on
To shipwreck and to ruin. From the
North,
Storm-cloud on storm-cloud issuing
volleys forth

Fresh thunderbolts of war. The Emperor
 Dallies within his closed seraglios,
 Letting his eunuchs waste the might
 of Rome,
 While the fierce Scythian, in a surge of
 blood,
 Bursts on our bare-swept plains. Upon
 the South,
 Our rival Cherson, with a jealous eye,
 Waits on our adverse chances, taking
 joy
 Of her republican guile in every check
 And buffet envious Fortune deals our
 State,
 Which doth obey a King. Of all our
 foes
 I hate and dread these chiefly, for I fear
 Lest, when my crown falls from my
 palsied brow,
 My son Asander's youth may prove too
 weak
 To curb these crafty burghers. Speak,
 I pray thee,
 Most trusty servant. Can thy loyal
 brain
 Devise some scheme whereby our dear-
 loved realm
 May break the mesh of Fate?

Lys. Indeed, my liege,
 Too well I know our need, and long
 have tossed

Through sleepless nights, if haply I
 might find

Some remedy, but that which I have
 found

Shows worse than the disease.

King. Nay, speak; what is it?
 I know how wise thy thought.

Lys. My liege, it chances
 The Archon Lamachus is old and spent.
 He has an only child, a daughter,
 Gycia.

The treasure of his age, who now
 blooms forth

In early maidenhood. The girl is
 fair

As is a morn in springtide; and her
 father

A king in all but name, such reverence
 His citizens accord him. Were it not
 well

The Prince Asander should contract
 himself

In marriage to this girl, and take the
 strength

Of Cherson for her dowry, and the
 power

Of their strong fleets and practised arms
 to thrust

The invading savage backward?

King. Nay, my lord;
 No more of this, I pray. There is no
 tribe

Of all the blighting locust-swarms of
 war,

Which sweep our wasted fields, I would
 not rather

Take to my heart and cherish than
 these vipers.

Dost thou forget, my lord, how of old
 time,

In the brave days of good Sauromatus,
 These venomous townsmen, shame-
 lessly allied

With the barbarian hosts, brought us
 to ruin;

Or, with the failing force of Cæsar
 leagued,

By subtle devilish enginery of war,

Robbed Bosphorus of its own, when,
 but for them,

Byzantium were our prey, and all its
 might,

And we Rome's masters? Nay; I
 swear to thee,

I would rather see the Prince dead at
my feet,
I would rather see our loved State sunk
and lost,
Than know my boy, the sole heir of my
crown,
The sole hope of my people, taken and
noosed
By this proud upstart girl. Speak not
of it ;
Ruin were better far.

Lys. My liege, I bear
No greater favour to these insolent
townsmen
Than thou thyself. I, who have fought
with them
From my first youth—who saw my
father slain,
Not in fair fight, pierced through by
honest steel,
But unawares, struck by some villanous
engine,
Which, armed with inextinguishable
fire,
Flew hissing from the walls and slew at
once
Coward and brave alike ; I, whose
young brother,
The stripling who to me was as a son,
Taken in some sally, languished till he
died,
Chained in their dungeons' depths ;—
must I not hate them
With hate as deep as hell ? And yet I
know
There is no other way than that
Asander
Should wed this woman. This alone
can staunch
The bleeding wounds of the State.

King. Lysimachus,
I am old ; my will is weak, my body
bent,

Not more than is my mind ; I cannot
reason.

But hark ! I hear the ring of coursers'
feet
Bespeak Asander coming. What an
air
Of youth and morning breathes round
him, and brings
A light of hope again !

Enter ASANDER from the chase.

Asan. My dearest sire and King,
art thou thus grave
Of choice, or does our good Lysimachus,
Bringing unwonted loads of carking
care,
O'ercloud thy brow ? I prithee, father,
fret not ;
There is no cloud of care I yet have
known—
And I am now a man, and have my
cares—
Which the fresh breath of morn, the
hungry chase,
The echoing horn, the jocund choir of
tongues,
Or joy of some bold enterprise of
war,
When the swift squadrons smite the
echoing plains,
Scattering the stubborn spearmen, may
not break,
As does the sun the mists. Nay, look
not grave ;
My youth is strong enough for any
burden
Fortune can cast on me.

King. Couldst thou, Asander,
Consent to serve the State, if it should
bid thee

Wed without love ?

Asan. What, father, is that all ?
I do not know this tertian fever, love,

Of which too oft my comrades groan
and sigh,

This green-sick blight, which turns a
lusty soldier

To a hysterical girl. Wed without
love?

One day I needs must wed, though
love I shall not.

And if it were indeed to serve the
State,

Nay, if 'twould smooth one wrinkle
from thy brow,

Why, it might be to-morrow. Tell me,
father,

Who is this paragon that thou designest
Shall call me husband? Some bar-
barian damsel

Reared on mare's milk, and nurtured
in a tent

In Scythia? Well, 'twere better than
to mate

With some great lady from the Imperial
Court,

Part tigress and all wanton. I care
not;

Or if the scheme miscarry, I care
not.

Tell me, good father.

King. Wouldst thou wed, Asander,
If 'twere to save the State, a Greek
from Cherson?

Asan. From Cherson? Nay, my
liege; that were too much.

A girl from out that cockatrice's den—
Take such a one to wife? I would
liefer take

A viper to my breast! Nay, nay, you
jest,

My father, for you hate this low-born
crew,

Grown gross by huckstering ways and
sordid craft—

Ay, more than I.

King. It is no jest, my son.
Our good Lysimachus will tell thee all
Our need and whence it comes.

Lys. My gracious Prince,
Thus stands the case, no otherwise.
Our foes

Press closer year by year, our wide-
spread plains

Are ravaged, and our bare, unpeopled
fields

Breed scantier levies; while the trea-
sury

Stands empty, and we have not means
to buy

The force that might resist them.
Nought but ruin,

Speedy, inevitable, can await
Our failing Bosphorus' unaided strength,

Unless some potent rich ally should
join

Our weakness to her might. None
other is there

To which to look but Cherson; and I
know,

From trusty friends among them, that
even now,

Perchance this very day, an embassy
Comes to us with design that we should
sink

Our old traditional hate in the new
bonds

Which Hymen binds together. For
the girl

Gycia, the daughter of old Lamachus,
Their foremost man, there comes but
one report—

That she is fair as good.

Asan. My lord, I pray you,
Waste not good breath. If I must sell
myself,

It matters not if she be fair or foul,
Angel or doubly damned; hating the
race,

Men, maidens, young and old, I would
blight my life

To save my country.

King. Thanks, my dearest son.
There spake a patriot indeed.

Servant. My liege,
An embassy from Cherson for the King.

Enter Ambassador, with retinue.

Ambas. Sirs, I bring you a message
from Lamachus, the Archon of Cher-
son.

Lys. Sirs, forsooth! Know ye not
the dignity of princes, or does your
republican rudeness bar you from all
courtesy? I do not count myself equal
to the King, nor, therefore should you.

King. Nay, good Lysimachus, let
him proceed.

Ambas. If I am blunt of speech, I
beg your forgiveness. I bring to you
a letter from the citizen Lamachus,
which I shall read, if it be your
pleasure.

King. Read on.

Ambas. "To the King of Bosporus,
Lamachus sends greeting. We are
both old. Let us forget the former
enmities of our States, and make an
alliance which shall protect us against
the storm of barbarian invasion which
Cæsar is too weak to ward off. Thou
hast a son, and I a daughter. Thy son
is, from all report, a brave youth and
worthy. My daughter is the paragon
of her sex. I have wealth and posses-
sions and respect as great as if I were a
sceptred King. The youth and the
maid are of fitting age. Let us join
their hands together, and with them
those of our States, and grow strong
enough to defy the barbarians, and
Rome also."

Asan. My liege, I am willing for
this marriage. Let it be.

King. My son, we have not yet
heard all. Read on, sir.

Ambas. "There is one condition
which not my will, but the jealousy of
our people enforces, viz. that the Prince
Asander, if he weds my daughter, shall
thenceforth forswear his country, nor
seek to return to it on pain of death.
I pray thee, pardon the rudeness of my
countrymen; but they are Greeks, and
judge their freedom more than their
lives."

Asan. Insolent hounds!
This is too much. I will have none of
them.

Take back that message.

King. Thou art right, my son.
I could not bear to lose thee, not to
win

A thousand Chersons. Let us fight
alone,

And see what fortune sends us.

Lys. Good my liege,
Be not too hasty. (*To Ambassador*)
Sir, the King has heard
The message which you bring, and
presently

Will send a fitting answer. [*Exit Am-
bassador.*]

Nay, my liege,
I beg your patience. That these fellows
make

Their friendship difficult is true; but
think

How great the value of it, and re-
member

How easy 'tis to promise and break
faith

With insolent dogs like these. This
Lamachus

Is older than your grace, and feebler far.

He will not live for ever, and, he gone,
Will not the Prince Asander be as
great,

The husband of his daughter and his
heir,

As *he* is now, and sway the power of
Cherson

For our own ends, and cast to all the
winds

This foul enforced compact, and o'er-
turn

This commonwealth of curs? I will
stake my life

That three years shall not pass ere he
is King

Of Cherson in possession, and at once
Of Bosphorus next heir.

"The tongue hath sworn, the mind
remains unsworn,"

So says their poet.

Asan. I'll have none of it.

I am not all Greek, but part Cimmerian,
And scorn to break my word.†

Let us face ruin, father, not deceit.

King. My noble son, I love thee.

Lys. Good, my liege,

And thou, my Lord Asander, ponder
it.

Consider our poor country's gaping
wounds,

And what a remedy lies to our hands.

I will die willingly if I devise not

A scheme to bend these upstarts to
your will. [Exeunt omnes.

SCENE II.—OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

MEGACLES and Courtiers.

Meg. Well, my lords, and so it is
all settled. We must all be on board
in half an hour. His Altitude the
Prince sails at once for Cherson, and

with a view to his immediate marriage.
Was ever such a rash step heard of?
Not twenty-four hours to get ready the
marriage equipment of a Prince of Bos-
phorus. Well, well, I dare say they
would be glad enough to take him with
no rag to his back. I dare say these
rascally republicans would know no
better if he were to be married in his
everyday suit.

1st Court. I' faith, I should never
have dreamt it. Asander, who is the
boldest huntsman and the bravest
soldier, and the best of good fellows,
to go and tie himself to the apron-
string of a Greek girl, a tradesman's
daughter from Cherson, of all places on
earth! Pah! it makes me sick!

2nd Court. But I hear she is beauti-
ful as Artemis, and—— Well, we are
all young or have been, and beauty is
a strong loadstone to such metal as the
Prince's.

3rd Court. Nay, he has never set
eyes on her; and, for that matter, the
Lady Irene was handsome enough, in
all conscience, and a jovial young
gentlewoman to boot. Ye gods! do
you mind how she sighed for him and
pursued him? It was a sight to please
the goddess Aphrodite herself. But
then, our good Asander, who had only
to lift up his little finger, was so cold
and positively forbidding, that I once
came upon the poor lady crying her
eyes out in a passion of mortified
feeling.

1st Court. Ay, she was from this
outlandish Cherson, was not she?
Aphrodite was a Greek woman also,
remember.

2nd Court. So she was. I had
quite forgotten where the lady came

from. Well, if she is there now, and cannot get her Prince, and would like a gay, tolerably well-favoured young fellow for a lover, I suppose she need go no further than the present company.

Meg. My lords, I pray you leave these frivolities, and let us come to serious matters. Think, I beg you, in what a painful position I am placed. I am to go, without proper notice, as Master of the Ceremonies of the Court of Bosphorus, to conduct an important Court-ceremonial with a pack of scurvy knaves, who, I will be bound, hardly know the difference between an Illustrious and a Respectable, or a Respectable and an Honourable. I must do my best to arrange all decently and in order, and as near as may be to the Imperial model, and all these matters I have to devise on shipboard, tossed about on that villanous Euxine, with a smell of pitch everywhere, and sea-sickness in my stomach. And when I get to Cherson, if ever I do get there alive, I have not the faintest idea whom I am to consult with—whether there is a Count of the Palace or anybody, in fact. I dare say there is nobody; I am sure there is nobody. A marriage of the heir apparent is a very serious affair, let me tell you. What a comfort it is that I have got the last edition of that precious work of the divine Theodosius on Dignities! If it were not for that, I should go mad.

1st Court. My good Megacles, I warn you the Prince cares as little for etiquette as he does for love-making.

Meg. Very likely, and that makes my position so difficult. Just reflect for a moment. When we go ashore at

Cherson, I suppose we shall be received by the authorities?

2nd Court. Surely, good Megacles.

Meg. Then, how many steps should Prince Asander take to meet his father-in-law Lamachus—eh? And how many steps should Lamachus take? You never gave the matter a thought? Of course not. And these are questions to be settled on the spot, and scores like them.

3rd Court. I dare say it won't matter at all, or very little.

Meg. Matter very little, indeed! very little, forsooth! Why, in the name of all the saints, do not alliances fall through for less? Are not bloody wars fought for less? Do I not remember the sad plight of the Grand Chamberlain, when the Illustrious Leo, the Pro-Consul of Macedonia, had a meeting at Court with the Respectable the Vice-Prefect of Pannonia? Now, the Pro-Consul should have taken four steps forward, as being the most noble, the Vice-Prefect five. But, the Vice-Prefect being a tall man, and the Pro-Consul a short one, the Grand Chamberlain did not sufficiently measure their distances; and so when they had taken but four steps each, there were the two Dignitaries bolt upright, face to face, glaring at each other, and no room to take the fraction of a foot pace more.

1st Court. Faith, a very laughable situation, good Megacles. Was it hard to settle!

Meg. I should think it was hard to settle. No one could interfere; the Book of Ceremonies was sent for, and was silent. There was nothing for it but that the Emperor, after half an

hour, broke up the Court in confusion, and those two remained where they were till it was quite dark, and then they got away, no one knows how. But what came of it? For fifteen years there was war and bloodshed between the provinces, and but for the invasion of the Goths, there would be to this day. Matter little, indeed! Why, you foolish youngster, ceremony is everything in life. To understand Precedence aright is to know the secrets of nature. The order of Precedence is the order of Creation. It is, in fact, a very cosmogony. Oh, a noble science! a noble science!

1st Court. Right, good Megacles, to magnify your office. Bravery is nothing; goodness is nothing; beauty is a foolish dream. Give us Ceremony, Ceremony, more Ceremony; it is the salt of life.

Meg. A very intelligent youth. But here comes the King.

*Enter the KING, ASANDER, and
LYSIMACHUS.*

Asan. My liege, I do your will, Though with a heavy heart. Farewell, my father.

If I must bid farewell to this dear City, Which nourished me from childhood, 'tis to save it,

Not otherwise, and thou my sire and King.

From thee I do not part, and oftentimes,

If the saints will, I yet shall welcome thee,

When all our foes are routed and our troubles

Fled like some passing storm-cloud, to my hearth,

And set thy heir upon thy knees, a Prince

Of Bosphorus and Cherson.

King. Good, my son, pray God keep you, for I dimly fear,

o dark a presage doth obscure my mind,

That we shall meet no more.

Lys. My honoured liege, These are the figments of a mind which grief

Hath part disordered. Thou shalt see thy son,

Trust me for it; I swear it. One thing more

Remains. I know what 'tis to be a youth

As yet untouched by love; I know what charm

Lies in the magic of a woman's eyes For a young virgin heart. I pray you, sir,

Swear to me by the saints, that, come what may,

For no allurement which thy new life brings thee,

The love of wife or child, wilt thou forget

Our Bosphorus, but still wilt hold her weal

Above all other objects of thy love In good or adverse fortune.

Asan. Nay, my lord, There is no need for oaths; yet will I swear it,

Here on this soldier's cross.

[*Makes a cross with the hilt of his sword.*

Farewell, my father, I mar my manhood, staying.

King. Farewell, son. Let my old eyes fix on thee till thou goest

Beneath the farthest verge. Good
Megacles,
And you brave gentlemen, be faithful
all
To me and to your Prince.
Lys. My Lord Asander,
Remember !

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LAMACHUS' PALACE, CHERSON.

GYCIA and IRENE.

Gycia. Sweetest Irene,
What joy it is to see thee once again
After so long an absence ! We had
grown
Together on one stalk so long, since
first
Our girlish lives began to burst to
flower,
That it was hard to part us. But me-
thinks
That something of the rose from off
thy cheek
Has faded, and its rounded outline fair
seems grown a little thinner.

Ire. Gycia,
The flower, once severed from the
stalk, no more
Grows as before.

Gycia. Thou strange girl, to put on
Such grave airs ! Ah ! I fear at Bos-
phorus
Some gay knight has bewitched thee ;
thou has fallen
In love, as girls say—though what it
may be
To fall in love, I know not, thank the
gods,
Having much else to think of.

Ire. Prithee, dear,
Speak not of this.

Gycia. Ah ! then I know 'tis true.
Confess what manner of thing love is.

Ire. Nay, nay, I cannot tell thee
(weeping), Gycia ;
Thou knowest not what thou askest.
What is love ?

Seek not to know it. 'Tis to be no
more

Thy own, but all another's ; 'tis to
dwell

By day and night on one fixed madding
thought,

Till the form wastes, and with the form
the heart

Is warped from right to wrong, and can
forget

All that it loved before, faith, duty,
country,

Friendship, affection—everything but
love.

Seek not to know it, dear ; or, knowing
it,

Be happier than I.

Gycia. My poor Irene !
Then, 'tis indeed a misery to love.

I do repent that I have tortured thee
By such unthinking jests. Forgive me,
dear,

I will speak no more of it ; with me
thy secret

Is safe as with a sister. Shouldst thou
wish

To unburden to me thy unhappy heart,
If haply I might bring thy love to thee.

Thou shalt his name divulge and
quality,

And I will do my best.

Ire. Never, dear Gycia.
Forget my weakness ; 'twas a passing
folly,

I love a man who loves me not again,

And that is very hell. I would die
sooner

Than breathe his name to thee. Fare-
well, dear lady!

Thou canst not aid me. [*Exit IRENE.*]

Gycia. Hapless girl! Praise
Heaven

That I am fancy-free!

Enter LAMACHUS.

Lama. My dearest daughter, why
this solemn aspect?

I have glad news for thee. Thou
knowest of old

The weary jealousies, the bloody
feuds,

Which 'twixt our Cherson and her
neighbour City

Have raged ere I was born—nay, ere
my grandsire

First saw the light of heaven. Both
our States

Are crippled by this brainless enmity.

And now the Empire, now the Scythian,
threatens

Destruction to our Cities, whom,
united,

We might defy with scorn. Seeing
this weakness,

Thy father, wishful, ere his race be
run,

To save our much-loved Cherson, sent
of late

Politic envoys to our former foe,

And now—i' faith, I am not so old,
'twould seem

That I have lost my state-craft—comes
a message.

The Prince Asander, heir of Bos-
porus,

Touches our shores to-day, and pre-
sently

Will be with us.

Gycia. Oh, father, is it wise?

Do fire and water mingle? Does the
hawk

Mate with the dove; the tiger with the
lamb;

The tyrant with the peaceful common-
wealth;

Fair commerce with the unfruitful
works of war?

What union can there be 'twixt our fair
city

And this half-barbarous race? 'Twere
against nature

To bid these opposite elements com-
bine—

The Greek with the Cimmerian. Fa-
ther, pray you,

Send them away, with honour if you
please,

And soothing words and gifts—only, I
pray you,

Send them away, this Prince who doth
despise us,

And his false retinue of slaves.

Lama. My daughter,

Thy words are wanting in thy wonted
love

And dutiful observance. 'Twere an
insult

Unwashed by streams of bloodshed,
should our City

Scorn thus the guests it summoned.
Come they must,

And with all hospitable care and
honour,

Else were thy sire dishonoured. Thou
wilt give them

A fitting welcome.

Gycia. Pardon me, my father,

That I spoke rashly. I obey thy will.

[*Going.*]

Lama. Stay, *Gycia.* Dost thou
know what 'tis to love?

Gycia. Ay, thee, dear father.

Lama. Nay, I know it well.

But has no noble youth e'er touched
thy heart?

Gycia. None, father, Heaven be
praised! The young Irene

Was with me when thou cam'st, and
all her life

Seems blighted by this curse of love—
for one

Whose name she hides, with whom in
Bosphorus

She met, when there she sojourned.
Her young brother,

The noble Theodorus, whom thou
knowest,

Lets all the world go by him and grows
pale

For love, and pines, and wherefore?—
For thy daughter,

Who knows not what love means, and
cannot brook

Such brain-sick folly. Nay, be sure,
good father,

I love not thus, and shall not.

Lama. Well, well, girl,

Thou wilt know it yet. I fetter not
thy choice,

But if thou couldst by loving bind
together

Not two hearts only, but opposing
peoples;

Supplant by halcyon days long years of
strife,

And link them in unbroken harmony;—
Were this no glory for a woman, this

No worthy price of her heart?

Gycia. Tell me, I pray,

What mean you by this riddle?

Lama. Prince Asander

Comes here to ask your hand, and with
it take

A gracious dower of peace and amity.

He does not ask thee to forsake thy
home,

But leaves for thee his own. All tongues
together

Are full of praise of him: virgin in love,
A brave youth in the field, as we have
proved

In many a mortal fight; a face and form
Like a young god's. I would, my love,
thy heart

Might turn to him, and find thy happi-
ness

In that which makes me happy. I am
old

And failing, and I fain would see thee
blest

Before I die, and at thy knees an heir
To all my riches, and the State of
Cherson

From anxious cares delivered, and
through thee.

Gycia. Father, we are of the Athe-
nian race,

Which was the flower of Hellas. Ours
the fame

Of Poets, Statesmen, Orators, whose
works

And thoughts upon the forehead of
mankind

Shine like a precious jewel; ours the
glory

Of those great Soldiers who by sea and
land

Scattered the foemen to the winds of
heaven,

First in the files of time. And though
our mother,

Our Athens, sank, crushed by the might
of Rome,

What is Rome now?—An Empire rent
in twain;

An Empire sinking 'neath the unwieldy
weight

Of its own power ; an Empire where
 the Senate
 Ranks lower than the Circus, and a
 wanton
 Degrades the Imperial throne. But
 though to its fall
 The monster totters, this our Cherson
 keeps
 The bravery of old, and still maintains
 The old Hellenic spirit and some
 likeness
 Of the fair Commonwealth which ruled
 the world.
 Surely, my father, 'tis a glorious spring
 Drawn from the heaven-kissed summits
 whence we come ;
 And shall we, then, defile our noble
 blood
 By mixture with this upstart tyranny
 Which fouls the Hellenic pureness of
 its source
 In countless bastard channels? If our
 State
 Ask of its children sacrifice, 'tis well.
 It shall be given ; only I prithee,
 father,
 Seek not that I should with barbaric
 blood
 Taint the pure stream, which flows
 from Pericles.
 Let me abide unwedded, if I may,
 A Greek girl as before.
Lama. Daughter, thy choice
 Is free as air to accept or to reject
 This suitor ; only, in the name of
 Cherson,
 Do nothing rashly, and meanwhile take
 care
 That nought that fits a Grecian State
 be wanting
 To do him honour.
Gycia. Sir, it shall be done.

SCENE II.—OUTSIDE THE PALACE
 OF LAMACHUS.

MEGACLES and COURTIERS.

Meg. Well, my lords, and so this is
 the palace. A grand palace, forsooth,
 and a fine reception to match ! Why,
 these people are worse than barbarians.
 They are worse than the sea, and that
 was inhospitable enough. The saints
 be praised that that is over, at any rate.
 Oh, the intolerable scent of pitch, and
 the tossing and the heaving ! Heaven
 spare me such an ordeal again ! I
 thought I should have died of the
 smells. And here, can it be ? Is it
 possible that there is a distinct odour
 of—pah ! what ? Oils, as I am a
 Christian, and close to the very palace
 of the Archon ! What a detestable
 people ! Some civet, good friends,
 some civet !

1st Court. Here it is, good Mega-
 cles. You did not hope, surely, to find
 republicans as sweet as those who live
 cleanly under a King ? But here are
 some of their precious citizens at last.

Enter CITIZENS hurriedly.

1st Citizen. I pray you, forgive us,
 gentlemen. We thought the Prince
 would take the land at the other quay,
 and had prepared our welcome accord-
 ingly.

Meg. Who are these men ?

1st Court. They are honourable
 citizens of Cherson.

Meg. Citizens ! They will not do
 for me. The Count of the Palace
 should be here with the Grand Cham-
 berlain to meet my Master.

1st Cit. Your Master ? Oh ! then
 you are a serving man, as it would

seem. Well, my good man, when comes your Master?

Meg. Oh, the impertinent scoundrel! Do you know, sir, who I am?

1st Cit. Probably the Prince's attendant, his lackey, or possibly his steward. I neither know nor care.

Meg. Oh, you barbarian! Where is the Count of the Palace, I say?

1st Cit. Now, citizen, cease this nonsense. We have not, thank Heaven, any such foolish effeminate functionary.

Meg. No Count of the Palace? Heavens! what a crew! Well, if there is none, where are your leading nobles? where the Respectable and Illustrious? You are certainly not Illustrious nor Respectable; you probably are not even Honourable, or if you are you don't look it.

1st Cit. What, you wretched popinjay of a serving man! You dare address a Greek citizen in that way? Take that, and that! [*Beats him.*]

1st Court. Draw, gentlemen! These are ruffians! [*They fight.*]

Enter ASANDER.

Asan. Put up your swords, gentlemen. Why, fellows, what is this? Is this your hospitality to your guests?

1st Cit. Nay, sir; but this servant of yours has been most insolent, and has abused and insulted our State and its manners. He told us that we were not men of honour; and some of us, sir, are young, and have hot blood, and, as Greek citizens of Cherson, will not bear insults.

Asan. Insolent upstarts, you are not worthy of our swords! Come, my Lord Megacles, heed them not. Here is their master.

Enter LAMACHUS and Senators.

Lama. We bid you heartfelt welcome, Prince, to Cherson.

That we have seemed to fail to do you honour

Comes of the spite of fortune. For your highness,

Taking the land at the entrance of the port,

Missed what of scanty pomp our homely manners

Would fain have offered; but we pray you think

'Twas an untoward accident, no more. Welcome to Cherson, Prince!

Asan. Methinks, my lord, Scarce in the meanest State is it the custom

To ask the presence of a noble guest With much insistence, and when he accepts

The summons, and has come, to set on him With insolent dogs like these.

Lama. Nay, Prince, I pray you, What is it that has been?

Asan. Our chamberlain Was lately, in your absence, which your highness

So glibly doth excuse, set on and beaten By these dogs here.

Lama. Nay, sir, they are not dogs, But citizens of honour; yet indeed Wanting, I fear, in that deep courtesy Which from a stranger and a guest refuses

To take provoked offence. My lord, indeed

I am ashamed that citizens of Cherson Should act so mean a part. Come, Prince, I pray you

Forget this matter, and be sure your coming

Fills me with joy. Go, tell the Lady
Gycia
The Prince is safe in Cherson.

*Enter GYCIA, IRENE, MELISSA, and
Ladies. IRENE, seeing ASANDER,
faints, and is withdrawn, GYCIA
supporting her. Confusion.*

Meg. My Lord Asander, remember
what is due to yourself and Bosphorus.
Remember, when this merchant's
daughter comes, you *must* not treat her
as an equal. Courtesy to a woman is
all very well, but rank has greater
claims still, especially when you have
to deal with such people as these.
Now, remember, you must make *no*
obeisance at all; and if you advance to
meet her more than one step, you are
lost for ever. These are the truly
important things.

Asan. Good Megacles,
Forewarned I am forearmed.

(Aside) Thou fluent trickster!
Fit head of such a State! I would to
Heaven
I had never come!

Re-enter GYCIA.

Nay, nay, I thank the saints
That I have come. Who is this peer-
less creature?
Is this the old man's daughter?

Lama. Prince Asander,
This is my daughter, Gycia. Of the
prince
Thou hast heard many a time, my
daughter.

Gycia (confused). Ay!—
Indeed I—

Lama. Come, my girl, thou art
not used
To fail of words.

Asan. Nay, sir, I pray you press
her not to speak.

And yet I fain would hear her. Artemis
Showed not so fair, nor with a softer
charm

Came Hebe's voice.

Gycia. Nay, sir, I did not know
A soldier could thus use a courtier's
tongue.

Asan. If being bred in courts would
give me power
To put my thought in words, then would
I fain

Be courtier for thy sake.

Gycia. Ah, sir, you jest.
The ways of courts we know not, but I
bid thee

Good welcome to our city, and I prithee
Command whatever service our poor
Cherson

Can give whilst thou art here. *(To
MEGACLES)* Pray you my lord,
Accompany his Highness and our house-
hold

To the poor chambers which our homely
state

Allots for him. They are but poor,
I know,

For one who lives the stately life of
kings;

But such as our scant means can reach
they are.

Meg. My lady, I have lived long
time in courts,

But never, in the palaces of Rome,
Have I seen beauty such as yours, or
grace

More worthy of a crown. *(To MELISSA)*
To you, my lady,

I bow with most respectful homage.
Surely

The goddess Heré has not left the
earth

While you are here. I humbly take
my leave

For the present of your Highness with
a thousand

Obeisances, and to your gracious father
Humbly I bend the knee. My Lord
Asander,

I do attend your Highness.

Mel. What a man !

What noble manners ! What a polished
air !

How poor to such a courtier our rude
Court

And humble manners show !

Asan. Good Megacles,

Get me to my chamber—quick, ere I
o'erpass

All reasonable limits. I am sped ;

I am myself no more.

Lama. Farewell awhile.

We will welcome you at supper.

[*Exeunt all but LAMACHIUS and*
GYCIA.

Lama. Well, my daughter,

What think you of this hot-brained
youth ? I' faith,

I like his soldier's bluntness, and he
seemed

To be a little startled, as I thought,

By something which he saw when thou
didst come.

Perchance it was the charm of one who
came

Among thy ladies took him.

Gycia. Nay, my father,

I think not so indeed.

Lama. Ah ! well, I am old,

And age forgets. But this I tell thee,
daughter :

If in my youth I had seen a young
man's gaze

Grow troubled, and he should start,
and his cheek pale,

A young girl drawing near, I had
almost thought

Him suddenly in love.

Gycia. Oh, nay indeed !

Who should be favoured thus ? There
is no woman

In our poor Cherson worthy that his
gaze

Might rest on her a moment.

Lama. Ah, my girl,

Is it thus with thee ? They say that
love is blind,

And thou art blind, therefore it may
be, Gycia,

That thou too art in love. Tell me
how it is.

Couldst thou love this man, if he loved
thee ?

Gycia (*throwing herself on her father's*
neck). Father !

Lama. Say no more, girl. I am not
so old as yet

That I have quite forgotten my own
youth,

When I was young and loved ; and if
I err not,

I read love's fluttering signals on thy
cheek,

And in his tell-tale eyes. But listen !
Music !

We must prepare for supper with our
guests.

SCENE III.—A STREET IN
CHERSON.

MEGACLES ; afterwards MELISSA.

Megacles. Well, it is time for the
banquet. Somehow, this place im-
proves on acquaintance, after all. Poor,
of course, and rude to a degree. But
truly the Lady Gycia is fair—as fair,

indeed, as if she was the Emperor's daughter. She is a beautiful creature, truly. But give *me* that delightful lady-in-waiting of hers, the Lady Melissa. What grace! what rounded proportions! I like mature beauty. She is as like the late divine Empress as two peas, and I thought—I dare say I was wrong, but I really thought—I made an impression. Poor things! poor things! They can't help themselves. We courtiers really ought to be very careful not to abuse our power. It is positive cruelty. The contest is too unequal. It makes one inclined sometimes to put on the manners of a clown, so as to give them a chance. Nay, nay, you might as well ask the Ethiopian to change his skin as a courtier his fine manners. By all the saints! here she comes in *propria persona*.

Enter the LADY MELISSA.

Mel. Heavens! it is the strange nobleman. I am sure I am all of a flutter.

Meg. (*advancing with formal bows*). My lady, I am enchanted (*bows again; then takes several steps to the right, then to the left, and bows*). What a wonderful good fortune! Ever since I had the honour to see you just now, I have only lived in the hope of seeing you again.

Mel. (*curtsying*). Oh, my lord, you great courtiers can find little to interest you in our poor little Court and its humble surroundings.

Meg. Madam, I beg! not a word! I was just thinking that you exactly resembled the late divine Empress.

Mel. Oh, my lord, forbear! The Empress! and I have never been out

of Cherson! You flatter me, you flatter me, indeed. That is the way with all you courtiers from Constantinople. Now, if you had said that my Lady Gycia was beautiful——

Meg. My dear lady, I do not admire her in the least. She has no manners, really—nothing, at any rate, to attract a man of the great world; a mere undeveloped girl, with all the passion to come. No, no, my good lady, give me a woman who has lived. We courtiers know manners and breeding when we see them, and yours are simply perfect, not to say Imperial.

Mel. What a magnificent nature! Well, to say the truth, the Lady Gycia is not at all to my taste. It is a cold, insipid style of beauty, at the best; and she is as self-willed and as straitlaced as a lady abdess. I suppose she is well matched with the Prince Asander?

Meg. Well, he is a handsome lad enough, and virtuous, but weak, as youth always is, and pliable. Now, for myself, I am happy to say I am steadfast and firm as a rock.

Mel. Ah, my lord, if all women saw with my eyes, there would not be such a run after youth. Give me a mature man, who has seen the world and knows something of life and manners.

Meg. What an intelligent creature! Madam, your sentiments do you credit. I beg leave to lay at your feet the assurance of my entire devotion.

Mel. Oh, my lord, you are too good! Why, what a dear, condescending creature!—the manners of a Grand Chamberlain and the features of an Apollo!

Meg. Permit me to enrol myself among the ranks of your humble slaves and admirers (*kneels and kisses her*

hand). But hark ! the music, and I must marshal the guests to the banquet. Permit me to marshal you.

[Exeunt with measured steps.]

SCENE IV.—THE GARDEN WITHOUT THE BANQUETING-ROOM. MOON-LIGHT. THE SEA IN THE DISTANCE, WITH THE HARBOUR.

ASANDER and GYCIA descend the steps of the palace slowly together. Music heard from within the hall.

Asan. Come, Gycia, let us take the soft sweet air
Beneath the star of love. The festive lights
Still burn within the hall, where late we twain
Troth-plighted sate, and I from out thine eyes
Drank long, deep draughts of love stronger than wine.
And still the minstrels sound their dulcet strains,
Which then I heard not, since my ears were filled
With the sweet music of thy voice. My sweet,
How blest it is, left thus alone with love,
To hear the love-lorn nightingales complain
Beneath the star-gemmed heavens, and drink cool airs
Fresh from the summer sea ! There sleeps the main
Which once I crossed unwilling. Was it years since,
In some old vanished life, or yesterday ?
When saw I last my father and the shores

Of Bosphorus ? *Was it days since, or years,

Tell me, thou fair enchantress, who hast wove

So strong a spell around me ?

Gycia. Nay, my lord ;
Tell thou me first what magic 'tis hath turned

A woman who had scoffed so long at love

Until to-day—to-day, whose blessed night

Is hung so thick with stars—to feel as I,
That I have found the twin life which the gods

Retained when mine was fashioned, and must turn

To what so late was strange, as the flower turns

To the sun ; ay, though he withers her, or clouds

Come 'twixt her and her light, turns still to him,

And only gazing lives.

Asan. Thou perfect woman !
And art thou, then, all mine ? What have I done,

What have I been, that thus the favouring gods

And the consentient strength of hostile States

Conspire to make me happy ? Ah ! I fear,

Lest too great happiness be but a snare
Set for our feet by Fate, to take us fast

And then despoil our lives.

Gycia. My love, fear not.
We have found each other, and no power has strength

To put our lives asunder.

Asan. Thus I seal
Our contract with a kiss. *[Kisses her.]*

Gycia. Oh, happiness !
To love and to be loved ! And yet
methinks
Love is not always thus. To some he
brings
Deep disappointment only, and the
pain

Of melancholy years. I have a lady
Who loves, but is unloved. Poor soul !
she lives
A weary life. Some youth of Bosphorus
Stole her poor heart.

Asan. Of Bosphorus saidst thou ?
And her name is ?

Gycia. Irene. Didst thou know
her ?

Asan. Nay, love, or if I did I have
forgot her.

Gycia. Poor soul ! to-day when first
we met, she saw
Her lover 'midst thy train and swooned
away.

Asan. Poor heart ! This shall be
seen to. Tell me, *Gycia*,
Didst love me at first sight ?

Gycia. Unreasonable,
To bid me tell what well thou knowest
already.

Thou know'st I did. And when did
love take thee ?

Asan. I was wrapt up in spleen and
haughty pride,
When, looking up, a great contentment
took me,

Shed from thy gracious eyes. Nought
else I saw,
Than thy dear self.

Gycia. And hadst thou ever loved ?

Asan. Never, dear *Gycia*.
I have been so rapt in warlike enter-
prises
Or in the nimble chase, all my youth
long,

That never had I looked upon a
woman

With thought of love before, though it
may be

That some had thought of me, being a
Prince

And heir of Bosphorus.

Gycia. Not for thyself ;
That could not be. Deceiver !

Asan. Nay, indeed !

Gycia. Oh, thou dear youth !

Asan. I weary for the day
When we our mutual love shall crown
with marriage.

Gycia. Not yet, my love, we are so
happy now.

Asan. But happier then, dear
Gycia.

Gycia. Nay, I know not
If I could bear it and live. But hark,
my love !

The music ceases, and the sated guests
Will soon be sped. Thou must resume
thy place

Of honour for a little. I must go,
If my reluctant feet will bear me
hence,

To dream of thee the livelong night.
Farewell,

Farewell till morning. All the saints
of heaven

Have thee in keeping !

Asan. Go not yet, my sweet ;
And yet I bid thee go. Upon thy lips
I set love's seal, thus, thus.

[*Kisses her. They embrace.*

Good night !

Gycia. Good night !

[*Exit GYCIA.*

Enter IRENE unperceived.

Asan. Ah, sweetest, best of women !
paragon

Of all thy sex, since first thy ancestress
Helen, the curse of cities and of men,
Marshalled the hosts of Greece ! But
she brought discord ;
Thou, by thy all-compelling sweetness,
peace

And harmony for strife. What have
I done,

I a rough soldier, like a thousand others
Upon our widespread plains, to have
won this flower

Of womanhood—this jewel for the
front

Of knightly pride to wear, and, wear-
ing it,

Let all things else go by ? To think
like I,

Fool that I was, only a few hours since,
Bemoaned the lot which brought me
here and bade me

Leave my own land, which now sinks
fathoms deep

Beyond my memory's depths, and scarce
would deign

To obey thee, best of fathers, when thy
wisdom

Designed to make me blest ! Was ever
woman

So gracious and so comely ? And I
scorned her

For her Greek blood and love of
liberty !

Fool ! purblind fool ! there is no other
like her ;

I glory being her slave.

Irene. I pray you, pardon me, my
Lord Asander.

I seek the Lady Gycia ; is she here ?

Asan. No, madam ; she has gone,
and with her taken

The glory of the night. But thou dost
love her—

Is it not so, fair lady ?

Ire. Ay, my lord,
For we have lived together all our
lives ;

I could not choose but love.

Asan. Well said indeed.

Tell me, and have I seen thy face
before ?

A something in it haunts me.

Ire. Ay, my lord.

Am I forgot so soon ?

Asan. Indeed ! Thy name ?

Where have I seen thee ?

Ire. Where ? Dost thou, then, ask ?

Asan. Ay ; in good truth, my
treacherous memory

Betrays me here.

Ire. Thou mayest well forget

My name, if thou hast quite forgot its
owner. [*Weeps.*]

I am called Irene.

Asan. Strange ! the very name

My lady did relate to me as hers

Who bears a hopeless love. Weep
not, good lady ;

Take comfort. Heaven is kind.

Ire. Nay, my good lord,

What comfort ? He I love loves not
again,

Or not me, but another.

Asan. Ah, poor lady !

I pity you indeed, now I have known
True recompense of love.

Ire. Dost thou say pity ?

And pity as they tell's akin to love.

What comfort is for me, my Lord
Asander,

Who love one so exalted in estate

That all return of honourable love

Were hopeless, as if I should dare to
raise

My eyes to Cæsar's self ? What
comfort have I,

If lately I have heard this man I love

Communing with his soul, when none
 seemed near,
 Betray a heart flung prostrate at the
 feet
 Of another, not myself; and well I
 know
 Not Lethe's waters can wash out
 remembrance
 Of that o'ermastering passion—naught
 but death
 Or hopeless depths of crime?

Asan. Lady, I pity
 Thy case, and pray thy love may meet
 return.

Ire. Then wilt thou be the suppliant
 to thyself,
 And willing love's requital, Oh, requite
 it!

Thou art my love, Asander—thou,
 none other.

There is naught I would not face, if I
 might win thee.

That I a woman should lay bare my
 soul;

Disclose the virgin secrets of my heart
 To one who loves me not, and doth
 despise

The service I would tender!

Asan. Cease, I pray you;
 These are distempered words.

Ire. Nay, they are true,
 And come from the inner heart. Leave
 these strange shores

And her you love. I know her from a
 child.

She is too high and cold for mortal
 love;

Too wrapt in duty, and high thoughts
 of State,

Artemis and Athené fused in one,
 Ever to throw her life and maiden
 shame

As I do at thy feet.

[*Kneels.*

Asan. Rise, lady, rise;
 I am not worthy such devotion.

Ire. Take me
 Over seas; I care not where. I'll be
 thy slave,
 Thy sea-boy; follow thee, ill-housed,
 disguised,
 Through hardship and through peril, so
 I see

Thy face sometimes, and hear some-
 times thy voice,
 For I am sick with love.

Asan. Lady, I prithee
 Forget these wild words. I were less
 than man

Should I remember them, or take the
 gift

Which 'tis not reason offers. I knew
 not

Thy passion nor its object, nor am free
 To take it, for the vision of my soul

Has looked upon its sun, and turns no
 more

To any lower light.

Ire. My Lord Asander,
 She is not for thee; she cannot make
 thee happy,

Nor thou her. Oh, believe me! I am
 full

Of boding thoughts of the sure fatal
 day

Which shall dissolve in blood the bonds
 which love

To-day has plighted. If thou wilt not
 take me,

Then get thee gone alone. I see a
 fire

Which burns more fierce than love, and
 it consumes thee.

Fly with me, or alone, but fly.

Asan. Irene,
 Passion distracts thy brain. I pray
 you, seek

Some mutual love as I. My heart is
fixed,
And gone beyond recall. [Exit.

Enter THEODORUS unseen.

Ire. (weeping passionately). Dis-
graced ! betrayed !

Rejected ! All the madness of my
love

Flung back upon me, as one spurns a
gift

Who scorns the giver. That I love
him still,

And cannot hate her who has robbed
me of him !

I shall go mad with shame !

Theo. Great Heaven ! sister,
What words are these I hear ? My
father's daughter

Confessing to her shame ! [*IRENE weeps*
Come, tell me, woman ;

I am thy brother and protector, tell
me

What mean these words ?

Ire. Nay, nay, I cannot, brother.
They mean not what they seem, indeed
they do not.

Theo. They mean not what they
seem ! Thou hast been long

In Bosphorus, and oftentimes at the Court
Hast seen the Prince. When he to-day
comes hither,

Thou swonest at the sight. I, seek-
ing thee,

Find thee at night alone, he having left
thee,

Lamenting for thy shame. Wouldst
have me credit

Thy innocence ? Speak, if thou hast a
word

To balance proofs like these, or let thy
silence

Condemn thee.

*Ire. (after a pause, and slowly, as if
calculating consequences).* Then
do I keep silence, brother,
And let thy vengeance fall.

Theo. Oh, long-dead mother,
Who now art with the saints, shut fast
thy ears

Against thy daughter's shame ! These
are the things

That make it pain to live : all precious
gifts,

Honour, observance, virtue, flung away
For one o'ermastering passion. Why
are we

Above the brute so far, if we keep still
The weakness of the brute ? Go from
my sight,

Thou vile, degraded wretch. For him
whose craft

And wickedness has wronged thee,
this I swear—

I will kill him, if I can, or he shall
me.

I will call on him to draw, and make
my sword

Red with a villain's blood.

Ire. (eagerly). Nay, nay, my
brother,

That would proclaim my shame ; and
shouldst thou slay him,

Thou wouldst break thy lady's heart.

Theo. Doth she so love him ?

Ire. Ay, passionately, brother.

Theo. Oh, just Heaven !

And oh, confusèd world !

How are we fettered here ! I may not
kill

A villain who has done my sister
wrong,

Since she I love has given her heart to
him,

And hangs upon his life. I would not
pain

My Gycia with the smallest, feeblest
pang

That wrings a childish heart, for all the
world.

How, then, to kill her love, though
killing him

Would rid the world of a villain, and
would leave

My lady free to love? 'Twere not
love's part

To pain her thus, not for the wealth
and power

Of all the world heaped up. I tell
thee, sister,

Thy paramour is safe—I will not seek
To do him hurt; but thou shalt go to-
night

To my Bithynian castle. Haply thence,
After long penances and recluse days,
Thou mayst return, and I may bear
once more

To see my sister's face.

Ire. Farewell, my brother!
I do obey; I bide occasion, waiting

For what the years may bring.

Theo. Repent thy sin.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—CHERSON, TWO YEARS
AFTER. THE PALACE OF LAMA-
CHUS.

ASANDER and GYCIA.

Gycia. What day is this, Asander?
Canst thou tell me?

Asan. Not I, my love. All days
are now alike;

The weeks fleet by, the days equivalent
gems

Strung on a golden thread.

Gycia. Thou careless darling!
I did not ask thee of the calendar.

Dost think a merchant's daughter knows
not that?

Nay, nay; I only asked thee if thou
knewest

If aught upon this day had ever brought
Some great change to thee.

Asan. Sweetest, dearest wife,
Our marriage! Thinkest thou I should
forget,

Ay, though the chills of age had froze
my brain,

That day of all my life?

Gycia. Dost thou regret it?
I think thou dost not, but 'tis sweet to
hear

The avowal from thy lips?

Asan. Nay, never a moment.
And thou?

Gycia. Nay, never for a passing
thought.

I did not know what life was till I
knew thee.

Dost thou remember it, how I came
forth,

Looking incuriously to see the stranger,
And lo! I spied my love, and could
not murmur

A word of courtesy?

Asan. Dost thou remember
How I, a feverish and hot-brained
youth,

Full of rash pride and princely arro-
gance,

Lifted my eyes and saw a goddess
coming—

Gycia. Nay, a weak woman only.

Asan. And was tamed
By the first glance?

Gycia. What! are we lovers still,
After two years of marriage?

Asan. Is it two years,
Or twenty? By my faith, I know not
which,

For happy lives glide on like seaward
streams

Which keep their peaceful and un-
ruffled course

So smoothly that the voyager hardly
notes

The progress of the tide. Ay, two
years 'tis,

And now it seems a day, now twenty
years,

But always, always happy.

[Embraces GYCIA.]

Gycia. Yet, my love,
We have known trials too. My
honoured sire

Has gone and left us since.

Asan. Ay, he had reaped
The harvest of his days, and fell asleep
Amid the garnered sheaves.

Gycia. Dearest, I know
He loved thee as a son, and always
strove

To fit thee for the place within our
State

Which one day should be thine. Some-
times I think,

Since he has gone, I have been covetous
Of thy dear love, and kept thee from
the labour

Of State-craft, and the daily manly
toils

Which do befit thy age; and I have
thought,

Viewing thee with the jealous eyes of
love,

That I have marked some shade of
melancholy

Creep on when none else saw thee, and
desired

If only I might share it.

Asan. Nay, my love,
I have been happy truly, though some-
times,

It may be, I have missed the clear, brisk
air

Of the free plains; the trumpet-notes
of war,

When far against the sky the glint of
spears

Lit by the rising sun revealed the
ranks

Of the opposing host, the thundering
onset

Of fierce conflicting squadrons, and the
advance

Of the victorious hosts. Oh for the
vigour

And freshness of such life! But I
have chosen

To sleep on beds of down, as Cæsar
might,

And live a woman's minion.

Gycia. Good my husband,
Thou shouldst not speak thus. I would
have thee win

Thy place in the Senate, rule our
Cherson's fortunes,

Be what my father was without the
name,

And gain that too in time.

Asan. What! You would have me
Cozen, intrigue, and cheat, and play
the huckster,

As your republicans, peace on their
lips

And subtle scheming treaties, till the
moment

When it is safe to spring? Would you
have me cringe

To the ignorant mob of churls, through
whose sweet voices

The road to greatness lies? Nay, nay;
I am

A King's son, and of Bosphorus, not
Cherson—

A Scythian more than Greek.

Gycia. Nay, my good lord,
 Scythian or Greek, to me thou art more
 dear
 Than all the world beside. Yet will
 not duty,
 The memory of the dead, the love of
 country,
 The pride of the great race from which
 we spring,
 Suffer my silence wholly, hearing thee.
 It is not true that men Athenian-born
 Are of less courage, less of noble nature,
 More crafty in design, less frank of
 purpose,
 Than are thy countrymen. They have
 met and fought them,
 Thou knowest with what fate. For
 polity
 I hold it better that self-governed men
 Should, using freedom, but eschewing
 license,
 Fare to what chequered fate the will of
 Heaven
 Reserves for them, than shackled by
 the chains
 The wisest tyrant, gilding servitude
 With seeming gains, imposes. We are
 free
 In speech, in council, in debate, in act,
 As when our great Demosthenes hurled
 back
 Defiance to the tyrant. Nay, my lord,
 Forgive my open speech. I have not
 forgot
 That we are one in heart and mind and
 soul,
 Knit in sweet bonds for ever. Put
 from thee
 This jaundiced humour.
 If State-craft please not, by the head-
 long chase
 Which once I know thou lovedst. Do
 not grudge

To leave me ; for to-day my bosom
 friend,
 After two years of absence, comes to me.
 I shall not feel alone, having Irene.
Asan. Whom dost thou say ?
 Irene ?
Gycia. Yes, the same.
 She was crossed in love, poor girl, dost
 thou remember,
 When we were wed ?
Asan. Gycia, I mind it well.
 Send her away—she is no companion
 for thee ;
 She is not fit, I say.
Gycia. What is't thou sayest ?
 Thou canst know nought of her. Nay,
 I remember,
 When I did ask thee if thou knewest her
 At Bosphorus, thou answeredst that
 thou didst not.
Asan. I know her. She is no fit
 mate for thee.
Gycia. Then, thou didst know her
 when thy tongue denied it.
Asan. How 'tis I know her boots
 not ; I forbid
 My wife to know that woman. Send
 her hence.
Gycia. Nay, nay, my lord, it profits
 not to quarrel.
 Thou art not thyself. Either thou
 knew'st her name
 When we were wedded, or unreasoning
 spleen
 Doth blind thy judgment since. Thou
 canst not know her
 Who has been absent.
Asan. Ask no more, good wife ;
 I give no reason.
Gycia. Nay, indeed, good husband,
 Thou hast no reason, and without good
 reason
 I will not spurn my friend.

Asan. Gycia, forgive me ;
I spoke but for our good, and I will
tell thee
One day what stirs within me, but to-
day
Let us not mar our happy memories
By any shade of discord.

Gycia. Oh, my love,
Forgive me if I have seemed, but for a
moment,
To fail in duty. I am all, all thine ;
I have nought but thee to live for.
Childish hands

And baby voices lisping for their mother
Are not for me, nor thee ; but, all in
all,

We joy together, we sorrow together,
and last
Shall die, when the hour comes, as
something tells me,
Both in the selfsame hour.

Asan. Nay, wife, we are young ;
Our time is not yet come. Let us
speak now
Of what I know thou holdest near thy
heart.

I do remember that it was thy wish
To celebrate thy father's name and
fame

By some high festal. If thy purpose
hold

For such observance, the sad day which
took him

Returns a short time hence ; I will
employ

Whatever wealth is mine to do him
honour,

And thee, my Gycia. Honouring the
sire,

I honour too the child.

Gycia. My love, I thank thee
For this spontaneous kindness, and I
love thee ;

I am all thine own again. Come, let
us go ;

Nor spare the wealth wherewith his
bounty blest us

To do fit honour to the illustrious dead.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—THE SAME.

MEGACLES, Courtiers ; *afterwards*
ASANDER.

Meg. Well, my lords, two years
have passed since we left our Bosphorus,
and I see no sign of our returning
there. If it were not for that delight-
ful Lady Melissa, whose humble slave
I am always (Courtiers *laugh*), I would
give all I am worth to turn my back
upon this scurvy city and its republican
crew. But my Lord Asander is so
devoted to his fair lady—and, indeed, I
can hardly wonder at it—that there
seems no hope of our seeing the old
shores again. I thought he would have
been off long ago.

1st Court. A model husband the
Prince, a paragon of virtue.

2nd Court. Well, there is no great
merit in being faithful to a rich and
beautiful woman. I think I could be
as steady as a rock under the like con-
ditions.

3rd Court. Well, mind ye, it is not
every man who could treat the very
marked overtures of the fair Lady
Irene as he did. And he had not seen
his wife then, either. No ; the man is
a curious mixture, somewhat cold, and
altogether constant, and that is not a
bad combination to keep a man straight
with the sex. Poor soul ! do you re-
member how she pursued him at Bos-

phorus, and how she fainted away at the wedding? They say she is coming back speedily, in her right mind. She has been away ever since, no one knows where. That solemn brother of hers conveyed her away privily.

1st Court. I hate that fellow—a canting hypocrite, a solemn impostor!

2nd Court. So say we all. But mark you, if the Lady Irene comes back, there will be mischief before long. What news from Bosphorus, my Lord Megacles?

Meg. I have heard a rumour, my lord, that his Majesty the King is ailing.

1st Court. Nay, is he? Then there may be a new King and a new Queen, and we shall leave this dog-hole and live at home like gentlemen once more.

3rd Court. Then would his sacred Majesty's removal be a blessing in disguise.

2nd Court. Ay, indeed would it. Does the Prince know of it?

Meg. I have not told him aught, having, indeed, nothing certain to tell; but he soon will, if it be true. But here his Highness comes.

Enter ASANDER.

My Lord Asander, your Highness's humble servant welcomes you with effusion. [*Bows low.*]

Asan. Well, my good Megacles, and you, my lords. There will be ample work for you all ere long. The Lady Gycia is projecting a great festival in memory of her father, and all that the wealth of Cherson can do to honour him will be done. There will be solemn processions, a banquet, and a people's holiday. Dost thou not spy some good ceremonial work there, my

good Megacles? Why, thou wilt be as happy as if thou wert at Byzantium itself, marshalling the processions, arranging the banquet, ushering in the guests in due precedence, the shipowner before the merchant, the merchant before the retailer. Why, what couldst thou want more, old Trusty? [*Laughs.*]

Meg. Ah, my Lord Prince, your Highness is young. When you are as old as I am, you will not scoff at Ceremony. This is the pleasantest day that I have spent since your Highness's wedding-day. I thank you greatly, and will do my best, your Highness.

Asan. That I am sure of, good Megacles. Good day, my lords, good day. [*Exeunt MEGACLES and Courtiers.*]

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My Lord Asander, a messenger from Bosphorus has just landed, bringing this letter for your Highness.

Asan. Let me see it. [*Reads.*]
 "Lysimachus to Asander sends greeting. Thy father is failing fast, and is always asking for his son. Thou art free, and must come to him before he dies. I have much to say to thee, having heard long since of a festival in memory of Lamachus to be held shortly. I will be with thee before then. Be ready to carry out the plan which I have formed for thy good, and will reveal to thee. Remember."

My father ailing?
 And asks for me, and I his only son
 Chained here inactive, while the old
 man pines
 In that great solitude which hems a
 throne,
 With none but hirelings round him.
 Dearest father,

I fear that sometimes in the happy years
Which have come since, my wandering
regards,
Fixed on one overmastering thought,
have failed
To keep their wonted duty. If indeed
This thing has been, I joy the time has
come
When I may show my love. But I
forget!
The fetters honour binds are adamant;
I am free no more. Nay, nay, there is
no bond
Can bind a son who hears his father's
voice
Call from a bed of pain. I must go
and will,
Though all the world cry shame on my
dishonour;
And with me I will take my love, my
bride,
To glad the old man's eyes. My mind
is fixed;
I cannot stay, I cannot rest, away
From Bosphorus. (*Summons Messenger*)
Go, call the Lady Gycia.
(*Resumes*) Ay, and my oath, I had for-
gotten it.
I cannot bear to think what pitiless plot
Lysimachus has woven for the feast.
What it may be I know not, but I fear
Some dark and dreadful deed. 'Twere
well enough
For one who never knew the friendly
grasp
Of hands that once were foemen's.
But for me,
Who have lived among them, come and
gone with them,
Trodden with them the daily paths of
life,
Mixed in their pleasures, shared their
hopes and fears

For two long happy years, to turn and
doom
Their city to ruin, and their wives and
children
To the insolence of rapine? Nay, I
dare not.
I will sail at once, and get me gone for
ever.
I will not tell my love that I am bound
By her father's jealous fancies to return
To Bosphorus no more. To break my
oath!
That were to break it only in the word,
But keep it in the spirit. Surely Heaven
For such an innocent perjury keeps no
pains.
But here she comes.

Enter GYCIA.

Gycia. Didst send for me, my
lord?

Asan. Gycia, the King is ill, and
asks for me;

He is alone and weak.

Gycia. Then, fly to him
At once, and I will follow thee. But
stay!

Is he in danger?

Asan. Nay, not presently;
Only the increasing weight of years
o'ersets

His feeble sum of force.

Gycia. Keeps he his bed?

Asan. Not yet as I have known.

Gycia. Well then, dear heart,
We yet may be in time if we should
tarry

To celebrate the honours we have vowed
To my dead father. This day sennight
brings

The day which saw him die.

Asan. Nay, nay, my sweet;
'Twere best we went at once.

Gycia. My lord, I honour
The love thou bearest him, but go I
cannot,
Until the feast is done. 'Twould cast
discredit
On every daughter's love for her dead
sire,
If I should leave this solemn festival
With all to do, and let the envious
crowd
Carp at the scant penurious courtesy
Of hireling honours by an absent
daughter
To her illustrious dead.

Asan. (earnestly). My love, 'twere
best
We both were far away.

Gycia. My lord is pleased
To speak in riddles, but till reason speaks
'Twere waste of time to listen.

Asan. Nay, my wife,
Such words become thee not, but to
obey
Is the best grace of woman. Were I
able,
I would tell thee all, I fear, for thee
and me,
But cannot.

Gycia. Then, love, thou canst go
alone,
And I must follow thee. The Archon
Zetho
Comes presently, to order what remains
To make the solemn festival do honour
To the blest memory of Lamachus.
Doubtless, he will devise some fitting
pretext
To excuse thy absence.

Asan. Nay, thou must not ask him ;
Breathe not a word, I pray.

Gycia. My good Asander,
What is it moves thee thus? See, here
he comes.

Enter ZETHO and Senators.

Gycia. Good morrow, my Lord
Zetho! We were late,
Debating of the coming festival,
And how my lord the Prince, having
ill news
From Bosphorus, where the King his
sire lies sick,
Can bear no part in it.

Zetho. I grieve indeed
To hear this news, and trust that
Heaven may send
Swift comfort to his son, whom we all
love.

Asan. I thank thee, Archon, for
thy courtesy ;
And may thy wish come true.

Gycia. And meantime, since my
husband's heart is sore
For his sire's loneliness, our pur-
pose is
That he should sail to-morrow and go
hence
To Bosphorus, where I, the festival
Being done, will join him later, and
devote
A daughter's loving care and tender
hand
To smooth the old man's sick-bed.

Zetho. Nay, my daughter,
I grieve this cannot be. The Prince
Asander,
Coming to Cherson only two years
gone,
Did pledge his solemn word to thy dead
father
That never would he seek, come foul
or fair,
To turn from Cherson homewards, and
I marvel
That never, in the years that since have
passed

Amid the close-knit bonds of wedded
lives,
He has revealed this secret. We who
rule
Our Cherson know through what blind
shoals of fortune
Our ship of state drives onward. And
I dare not,
Holding the rule which was thy father's
once,
Release him from the solemn pledge
which keeps
Our several States bound fast in amity,
But each from the other separate, and
each
Free from the perils tangled intercourse
Might breed for both. Indeed, it can-
not be ;
I grieve that so it is.

Gycia. My Lord Asander,
Are these things so indeed ?

Asan. They are, my wife.
A rash and heedless promise binds me
fast,

Which, in all frankness, I had never
dreamt

Could thus demand fulfilment. Who
is there

More loyal to the State than I ? Who
is there

Bound by such precious chains of love
and faith

As is thy husband ? If I said no word
Of this before, it was that I would
fain

Forget this hateful compact. Sir, I
beg you

Let me go hence, and when the old
man's sickness

Is done, as Heaven will have it, take
my word

That I will be a citizen of Cherson
Again, whate'er may come.

Zetho. If the King dies,
Then art thou straightway King of
Bosphorus,
Knowing the strength and weakness of
our State,
And having bound to thee by closest
friendship
Our chiefest citizens. Nay, nay, I dare
not

Relieve thee from the pledge.

Asan. Thou hoary trickster,
Speakest thou thus to me ? [*Draws.*

Gycia (interposing). Great heavens !
Asander,

Knowest thou what thou dost ? (*To*
ZETHO) Pardon him, sir.

He is not himself, I think, but half
distraught,

To bear himself thus madly.

Zetho. Daughter, the State
Knows to protect itself from insolence
And arrogant pride like this, and it is
certain

'Twas a wise caution led thy honoured
father

To stipulate that such ungoverned
passion

Should be cut off from those conspiring
forces

From which combined came danger.

Asan. *Gycia,*
Hearest thou this schemer ? Dost thou
know indeed

That I am prisoned here, while my
loved father

Lies on the bed of death ? Dost thou
distrust me,

That thou dost speak no word ?

Gycia. My lord, I cannot.
The measure which my father's wisdom
planned

For the safety of the State, I, a weak
woman,

Am too infirm to judge. Thou didst
 not tell me,
 Asking that I should fly with thee, the
 bonds
 By which thy feet were fettered. Had
 I known
 I never had consented. Had I gone,
 Breaking the solemn ordinance of State,
 I should have left with thee my former
 love,
 And sailed back broken-hearted. That
 thou grievest
 There is none knows as I, but oh, my
 love !
 Though it be hard to bear, yet is grief
 lighter
 Than broken vows, and blighted honour,
 and laws
 Made to sustain the State, yet upset
 By one man's will. Dearest, we cannot
 go—
 Nor thou ; the State forbids it. I will
 pray
 Thy father may grow strong again, and
 sit
 Here at our hearth a guest ; but this is
 certain—
 To Bosphorus we go not. And I pray
 you
 Make to my lord, who fills my father's
 place,
 What reparation thy ungoverned rage
 And hasty tongue demand.
Asan. Thou cold Greek woman !
 Of this, then, 'twas they warned me—
 a smooth tongue
 And a cold heart ; a brain by logic
 ruled,
 And not at all by love. Thou hast no
 pity,
 For pity shapes not into syllogisms ;
 Nor can affection ape philosophy,
 Nor natural love put on the formal robe

Of cold too-balanced State-craft. Hear
 me, old man,
 And thou too, wife. 'Twere better,
 ay, far better,
 That I should get me gone, and my
 wife with me,
 Than be pent here unwilling ; but
 were it better
 Or were it worse, be sure I will not
 stay
 When duty calls me hence. Wife, wilt
 thou come ?

Gycia. My lord, I cannot.

Asan. Then, I go alone.

Zetho. Nay, thou shalt not. Ho
 there ! arrest the Prince.

[*Guards arrest ASANDER.*]

Asan. Unhand me. At your peril.

[*Draws.*]

Gycia. Oh, my husband ! [*Wceps.*]

SCENE III.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

IRENE ; afterwards GYCIA.

Ire. What ! am I mad, or does
 some devilish power

Possess me heart and soul ? I once
 loved Gycia ;

I love Asander with o'ermastering love,
 And yet these frequent rumours of dis-
 sessions

Marring the smooth course of their
 wedded life

Bring me a swift, fierce joy. If aught
 befall

To separate those lovers, then might
 Fate

And Chance open for me the golden
 doors

That lead to Love's own shrine ; and
 yet I know not

If any power might melt to mutual love

That too-cold heart. But still, no other
chance

Is left but this alone : if I should force
Those loving souls apart, then 'twere
my turn.

Am I a monster, then, to will this
wrong?

Nay, but a lovesick woman only,
willing

To dare all for her passion. Though I
loathe

Those crooked ways, yet love, despite
myself,

Drives me relentless onward.

Enter GYCIA.

Dearest lady,
Why art thou thus cast down? Some
lovers' quarrel,

To be interred with kisses?

Gycia.

Nay, Irene,
This is no lovers' quarrel.

Ire.

Tell me, Gycia,
What was the cause?

Gycia.

The King of Bosphorus
Is ailing, and desires to see his son,
Who fain would go to him.

Ire.

And thou refusedst
To let thy lover go?

Gycia.

Nay, 'twas not so ;
But politic reasons of the State forbad
The Prince's absence.

Ire.

Well, whate'er the cause,
The old man fain would see his son,
and thou
Deniedst.

Gycia.

I denied him what the State
Denied him, and no more.

Ire.

The State denied him !
What does it profit thee to be the
daughter

Of Lamachus, if thou art fettered thus

In each wish of thy heart ? If it were I,
And he my love, I would break all
bonds that came

Between me and my love's desire.

Gycia.

Irene,

Thou know'st not what thou say'st.

Ire.

It may be so ;

I do not love by halves.

Gycia.

I do not need

That thou shouldst tutor me, who am
so blest

In love's requital. I have nought to
learn

From thee, who bearest unrequited love
For one thou wilt not name.

Ire.

Wouldst thou that I
Should name him? Nay, it were best
not, believe me,

For me and thee.

Gycia.

Why, what were it to me,
Thou luckless woman?

Ire.

What were it to thee?
More than thou knowest, much.

Gycia.

And therefore 'tis
That thou dost dare to tutor me to
deal

With the man I love, my husband.

Ire.

Gycia,
Love is a tyrannous power, and brooks
no rival

Beside his throne. Dost thou, then,
love indeed,

Who art so filled with duty?

Gycia.

Do I love?

Ay, from the depths of my enamoured
heart !

I am all his own to make or break at
will.

Only my duty to the State my mother
And the thrice-blessèd memory of my
sire

Forbids that I should sink my soul in
his,

Or, loving, grow unworthy. But,
indeed,

Thou pleadest his cause as if thyself
did love him.

Ire. As if I loved!—as if!

Gycia. Indeed, 'tis well
Thou didst not, were he free, for he, it
seems,

Has known of thee, and speaks not
kindly words.

I know not wherefore.

Ire. Did he speak of me?

Gycia. Ay, that he did.

Ire. And what said he?

Gycia. I think
'Twere best thou didst not know.

Ire. Tell me, I prithee;
I can bear to hear.

Gycia. 'Twas but a hasty word,
And best forgotten.

Ire. But I prithee tell me,
What said he?

Gycia. That 'twere best I were
alone
Than commercing with thee, since thou
wert not

My fit companion.

Ire. Said he that, the coward?

Gycia. I am his wife, Irene.

Ire. What care I?
I have loved this man too well, before
he saw thee.

There, thou hast now my secret. I
have loved him,

And he loved me, and left me, and
betrayed me.

Was it for him to brand me with this
stain?

Unfit for thy companion! If I
be,

Whose fault is that but his, who found
me pure

And left me what I am?

Gycia. What! dost thou dare
Malign my husband thus? I have
known his life

From his own lips, and heard no word
of thee.

Ire. He did confess he knew me.

Gycia. Ay, indeed,
Not that he did thee wrong.

Ire. My Lady Gycia,
Did ever man confess he wronged a
woman?

If thou believe not me, who am indeed
Disgraced, and by his fault, thou once
didst love

My brother Theodorus—send for him.
He is without, and waits me. Ask of
him,

Who has long known my secret.

Gycia. I will ask him.
Thou wretched woman, since thou art
polluted,

Whate'er my love may be, go from my
sight,

And send thy brother. Then betake
thyself

To a close prison in the haunted Tower,
Till I shall free thee. Out of my sight,
I say,

Thou wanton! [Exit IRENE.

What have I done, how have I sinned,
that Heaven

Tortures me thus? How can I doubt
this creature

Speaks something of the truth? Did he
not say

At first he never knew that wanton's
name?

Did he not afterwards betray such
knowledge

Of her and of her life as showed the
lie

His former words concealed? And yet
how doubt

My dear, who by two years of wedded
love
Has knit my soul to his? I know how
lightly
The world holds manly virtue, but I
hold
The laws of honour are not made to bind
Half of the race alone, leaving men
licensed
To break them when they will; but
dread decrees
Binding on all our kind. But oh, my
love,
I will not doubt thee, till conviction
bring
Proofs that I dare not doubt!

Enter THEODORUS.

Theo. My Lady Gycia,
I come at thy command.

Gycia. Good Theodorus,
Thou lovedst me once, I think?

Theo. I loved thee *once*!
Oh, heaven!

Gycia. I am in great perplexity
And sorrow, and I call upon thy
friendship

To succour me, by frank and free
confession

Of all thou knowest.

Theo. I can refuse thee nothing,
Only I beg that thou wilt ask me
nought

That answered may give pain.

Gycia. Nay, it is best
That I know all. I could not bear to
live

In ignorance, and yet I fear to grieve
thee.

By what I ask. Thy sister late has
left me—

Theo. Ask not of her, I pray; I
cannot answer.

Gycia. Nay, by thy love I ask it.
Answer me.

Theo. Have me excused, I pray.

Gycia. Then, I am answered.
My husband, she affirms, betrayed her
honour

In Bosphorus, and now denies the
crime.

Thou knowest it true.

Theo. Alas! I cannot doubt it.
I have known all for years.

Gycia. Ye saints of heaven!
Is there no shame or purity in men,
Nor room for trust in them? I am a
wife

Who thought she did possess her
husband wholly,

Virgin with virgin. I have thought I
knew

His inmost heart, and found it
innocent;

And yet while thus I held him, while I
lay

Upon his bosom, all these happy hours
The venom of a shameful secret lurked
Within his breast. Oh, monster of
deceit,

Thou never lovedst as I! That I
should give

The untouched treasure of my virgin
heart

For some foul embers of a burnt-out love,
And lavish on the waste a wanton left
My heart, my soul, my life! Oh, it is
cruel!

I will never see him more, nor hear
his voice,

But die unloved and friendless.

[*Weeps.*

Theo. (kneeling at her feet). Dearest
Gycia,

Thou canst not want a brother, friend,
and a lover

While I am living. Oh, my love, my dear,
Whom I have loved from childhood,
put away
This hateful marriage, free thee from
the bonds
Of this polluted wedlock, and make
happy
One who will love thee always !

Enter LYSIMACHUS unperceived.

Gycia. Rise, Theodorus.
I have no love to give. I am a wife.
Such words dishonour me.

Theo. Forgive me, *Gycia*.
I know how pure thy soul, and would
not have thee
Aught other than thou art.

Gycia. I do forgive thee.
'Twas love confused thy reason ; but
be brave.

Set a guard on thy acts, thy words, thy
thoughts.

'Tis an unhappy world !

[*THEODORUS kisses her hand and exit.*

Lys. Most noble lady,
Forgive me if at an unfitting time,
Amid the soft devoirs of gallantry,
I thus intrude unwilling ; but I seek
The Prince Asander.

Gycia. I have nought to hide
My husband might not know.

Lys. Then, thou art, doubtless,
His wife, the Lady *Gycia*. Good my
lady,

With such a presence to become a
crown,

We would you were at Bosphorus.

Gycia. 'Tis clear
Thou art a stranger here, or thou
wouldst know

That never would I leave my native city
To win the crown of Rome.

Lys. Madam, 'tis pity.

Gycia. Sir, this is courtly talk. You
came to see

My husband ; I will order that they
send him

At once to you. [*Exit GYCIA.*

Lys. That was indeed good fortune
brought me hither

When her lover knelt to her. I do not
wonder

That kneel he should, for she is
beautiful

As Helen's self. There comes some
difference

Between her and Asander, and 'twere
strange

If I might not so work on't as to widen
The breach good fortune sends me, and
to bind,

Through that which I have seen, the
boy her husband,

To execute my will.

Enter ASANDER.

Asan. Lysimachus,
I am rejoiced to see thee.

Lys. Good my lord,
How goes the world with thee ? Thou
art in mien

Graver than thou wast once.

Asan. I am ill at ease !
I am ill at ease ! How does the King
my father ?

Lys. Alas ! sir, he is ailing, and I
fear

Will never mend.

Asan. Is he in present danger ?

Lys. Ay, that he is. A month or
less from this

May see the end.

Asan. Keeps he his bed as yet ?

Lys. Nay, not yet, when I left him ;
but his mind

Turns always to his absent son with
longing,

And sometimes, as it were 'twixt sleep
and waking,

I hear him say, "Asander, oh, my
son !

Shall I not see thee more ?"

Asan. Oh, my dear father !
And dost thou love me thus, who have
forgot thee

These two long years? Belovèd, lonely
life !

Belovèd failing eyes ! Lysimachus,
I must go hence, and yet my honour
binds me.

O God, which shall I choose ? They
do forbid me—

The ruler of this place and that good
woman

Who is my wife, but holds their cursèd
State

More than my love—to go.

Lys. My prince, I come
To find a way by which thou mayst go
free

From that which binds thee fast.
This festival

To the dead Lamachus will give the
occasion

To set thee free. If thou dost doubt to
break

Thy word, yet doth a stronger, straiter
chain

Bind thee—thy oath. Thou hast not
forgot thy oath

To Bosphorus ?

Asan. Nay, I forget it not.
But what is it thou wouldst of
me ?

Lys. Asander,
The night which ends the festival shall
see us

Masters of Cherson.

Asan. Nay, but 'twere dishonour
To set upon a friendly State from
ambush—

'Twere murder, and not battle.

Lys. Art thou false
To thy own land and to thy dying
father ?

Asan. That I am not ; but never
could I bear

To play the midnight thief, and
massacre

Without announcement of legitimate
war

Whom daily I have known. My wife
I love

With all the love of my soul. If she
seem cold

When any word is spoken which may
touch

The safety of the State, think you she
would love

The husband who destroyed it ? All
my heart

Is in her keeping.

Lys. It is well indeed
To have such faith. Doubtless the
Lady Gycia

Returns this pure affection.

Asan. I would doubt
The saints in heaven sooner than her
truth,

Which if I doubted, then the skies
might fall,

The bounds of right and wrong might
be removed,

The perjurer show truthful, and the
wanton

Chaste as the virgin, and the cold, pure
saint

More foolish than the prodigal who eats
The husks of sense—it were all one to
me ;

I could not trust in virtue.

Lys. Thou art changed
 Since when thy ship set sail from
 Bosphorus ;
 Thou didst not always think with such
 fond thought
 As now thou dost. Say, didst thou
 find thy bride
 Heart-whole as thou didst wish ? Had
 she no lover
 Ere yet thou camest ?

Asan. Nay, nay ; I found my wife
 Virgin in heart and soul.

Lys. My Lord Asander,
 Art thou too credulous here ? What if
 I saw her
 On that same spot, not half an hour
 ago,

In tears, and kneeling at her feet a
 gallant

Noble and comely as a morn in June,
 Who bade her break, with passionate
 words of love,

Her hateful marriage vows, and make
 him blest

Who must for ever love

Asan. Thou sawest my wife
 Gycia, my pearl of women, my life, my
 treasure ?

Nay, nay, 'tis some sick dream ! Thou
 art mistaken.

Who knelt to her ?

Lys. She called him Theodorus.

Asan. Irene's brother ! Who was
 it who said

He loved her without hope ? *Lysimachus,*

What is it that thou sawest ? Come,
 'tis a jest !

Kneeling to Gycia, praying her to
 fly !

Nay, nay, what folly is this ? [*Laughs.*

Lys. My lord, I swear
 It is no jest indeed, but solemn earnest.

I saw him kneel to her ; I heard the
 passion

Burn through his voice.

Asan. And she ? What did my
 lady ?

She did repulse him sternly ?

Lys. Nay, indeed,
 She wept ; was greatly moved, and
 whispered to him,

" I am a wife."

Asan. Peace, peace ! I will not
 hear

Another word. How little do they
 know thee,

My white, pure dove ! My Lord
Lysimachus,

Some glamour has misled thee.

Lys. Well, my lord,
 I should rejoice to think it, but I cannot
 Deny my eyes and ears. Is not this
 noble

The brother of the lady who was once
 At Bosphorus at Court, and now attends
 The Lady Gycia ?

Asan. Ay, indeed he is.

Lys. Well, she is near at hand ; if
 thy belief

Inclines not to my tale—which yet is
 true—

Couldst thou not ask of her if ere your
 marriage

Her brother was enamoured of your
 wife,

And she of him ?

Asan. That might I do indeed.
 But, sooth to say, I would not speak
 again

With her you name ; and it may be
 indeed,

I know her well, the Lady Gycia,
 Who is angered with her for what cause

I know not,

Might well resent the converse.

Lys. Prince Asander,
There is no man so blind as he who
closes

His eyes to the light and will not have
it shine,

As thou dost now.

Asan. Then will I see this lady,
Though knowing it is vain.

[*Exit ASANDER.*]

Lys. I do not know
What he will hear, but this at least I
know :

That woman loves him, and will lie to
sow

Dissension 'twixt these lovers—which
accomplished,

The rest is easy, and I hold this Cher-
son

To make or mar at will. Ha ! a good
thought.

I will send a message to the Lady
Gycia

Which shall ensure't. If she mislikes
her friend,

It is odds of ten to one some jealous
humour

Has caused it, or may grow of it.

[*Writes.*]

“Dear lady,
Thou art wronged ; the Prince Asander
presently

Is with Irene alone. Seek them, and
wring

Confession of their fault.”

[*Summons a Messenger.*]

Ho there ! convey
These to the Lady Gycia, but stay
not

To tell her whence they come.

Mess. I go, my lord.

SCENE IV.—IRENE'S PRISON.

IRENE ; afterwards ASANDER and
GYCIA.

Ire. To think that once I loved
that haughty woman !

Ah, that was long ago, before love came
To tear our lives asunder. Though her
power

Can pen me here a prisoner, yet I know
That I have pierced her heart. Oh, it
is sweet

To be revenged, and know that ven-
geance brings

Victory in its train ! If I had power
To make Asander jealous of this wonder,
Then all were easy. But I know no
means

Whereby from this strait prison I might
sow

Suspicion of her who has never given
A shadow of cause.

Attendant. The Lord Asander
comes.

[*Enter ASANDER.*]

Asan. Lady, I grieve that thou art
in this place,

And fain would set thee free. Tell me
what cause

Has brought thee hither.

Ire. Ask me not, my lord ;
I cannot tell thee.

Asan. Nay, but know I must,
To plead thy cause.

Ire. 'Twas too great love of thee,
The love which thou didst spurn, that
brought me here.

Asan. But how should that be so ?

Ire. The Lady Gycia,
Holding thee to thy promise that thou
wouldst not

Go hence—no, not to close thy father's
eyes—

Took umbrage that I spoke with scant
respect

Of such unreasoning and unnatural
bond

As that which she approves.

Asan. Then am I grateful
For thy good-will, and grieve that it
should bring thee

To pine a prisoner here, and will essay
What reason can to free thee.

Ire. Thanks, my lord,
I would that *thou* wert free. I knew
the King,

And did receive much fatherly affection
From that most reverend man. I grieve
to hear

That he lies sick, and would rejoice to
tend him

As if I were a daughter.

Asan. Gentle lady,
No other voice of sympathy than thine
Have I yet heard in Cherson, and I
thank thee

For thy good-will.

Ire. 'Tis always thine, my lord,
And more, though I should end my
wretched days

In prison for thy sake.

Asan. I thank thee, lady,
And fain would ask of thee a greater
kindness :

I would that thou wouldst tell me of
thy brother.

Ire. My brother Theodorus? What
of him?

Asan. This only. Did he, ere I
knew my wife,
Bear towards her a great though inno-
cent love?

Ire. A great though innocent love?
Ay, a great love,

For certain. Spoke she not of it to
thee?

Asan. No word!

Ire. Ah! yet, maybe, 'twas inno-
cent—

Nay, I believe it, though she spoke not
of it,

And 'tis the wont of wives to laugh and
boast

Of innocent conquests.

Asan. Nay, she spoke no word.

Ire. And did no other of thy friends
at Cherson

Tell thee? Why, 'twas the talk of all
the city

How close they grew together, till thy
coming

And the necessities of Cherson turned
Her eyes from him to thee.

Asan. And does he still
Bear love for her?

Ire. And does he still bear love?
Ay, passionate love. The heart which
truly loves

Puts not its love aside for ends of State,
Or marriage bonds, or what the dullard
law

Suffers or does not suffer, but grows
stronger

For that which seeks to thwart it.

Asan. And did she
My wife return this love?

Ire. Ay, so 'twas said.
Ask me no more, I pray!

Enter GYCIA unperceived.

Asan. Nay, by the love
Thou bearest to me, speak!

Gycia. My Lord Asander,
What dost thou with this woman thus
alone?

Asan. 'Twere best thou didst not
ask.

Gycia. I have a right ;
 I will be answered. First, thou didst
 deny
 Thou knewest aught of her ; then said
 her nature
 Was such I might not call her friend,
 or live
 With her within four walls ; and now,
 her fault—
 Which she herself proclaimed—penning
 her here
 In a close prison, thou my husband
 comest
 To comfort her, 'twould seem—to travel
 o'er
 Again the old foul paths and secretly
 To gloat on the old passion.

Asan. Nay, I came
 Not for this cause, but one which I will
 tell thee.

I came to question of thy former love.

Gycia. To question *her* of *me* ?

Asan. To know the cause
 That made my wife, scarce one short
 hour ago,
 Within my home, when hardly I had
 left her,

Receive alone a lover kneeling to her
 With words of passionate love, and
 whisper to him,

“I am a wife.”

Gycia. Hast thou no shame,
Asander,
 To speak such words to me before this
 woman,

Who knows her brother's life ?

Ire. Nay, prithee, madam,
 Appeal not to me thus ; I could say
 much

On which I would keep silence.

Gycia. Thou base woman,
 And thou poor dupe or most perfidious
 man,

It were to honour ye to make defence
 Against a wanton and her paramour ;
 But thee, *Asander*, never will I take
 To my heart again, till thou hast put
 from thee

This lying accusation, and dost ask
 Pardon that thou hast dared with this
 base wretch

To impugn my honour.

Asan. Thou hast said no word
 Of answer to my charge ; thy bold
 defiance

Argues thy guilt.

Gycia. My guilt ? And canst
 thou dare

To say this thing to me ? I will speak
 no word ;

Denial were disgrace. Sir, I will have
 you

Leave this place quickly.

Asan. Madam, I obey you.

[*Exit.*

Gycia. And I too go. [*Exit.*

Ire. I hold these hapless fools
 In the hollow of my hand.

SCENE V.—OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

*LYSIMACHUS and three Courtiers ;
 afterwards ASANDER.*

Lys. My lords, what have you to
 report ? Have the men arrived ?

1st Court. For a week past they
 have been arriving at the rate of fifty a
 day. The ships anchor in due course.
 At dead of night, when everything is
 still, the merchandise is landed and
 conveyed well-disguised to the disused
 granaries adjoining *Lamachus'* palace,
 with good store of arms and provisions.

2nd Court. Yes, and by the day of
 the festival we shall have more than

five hundred well-armed men within the walls, who, while the people are feasting, will bear down all opposing forces and open the gates to the larger body, who will lie concealed in the grain-ships in the harbour.

Lys. Does no one suspect, think you, as yet?

1st Court. Not a soul. The stores are landed at midnight, and the place is haunted and full of noises.

3rd Court. Does the Prince know?

Lys. Not yet, not a word. I can't trust him with his blind love for his wife.

3rd Court. What if he will not be of us?

Lys. Then he shall be put under hatches at once for Bosphorus, and may take his wife with him if he pleases.

1st Court. But will he pardon the deed?

Lys. The lad is a good lad enough, but weak as water. The world always pardons successful enterprises. Besides, I am in great hopes that he has so quarrelled with the ruler of Cherson, and may be, moreover, so out of conceit with his wife, that we can do as we will with him.

2nd Court. But be prudent, my Lord Lysimachus, I beg, for we know not how far he is with us, and if he is against us now, it may take more than we know to keep our heads on our shoulders.

Lys. My lords, you shall not lose a drop of your blood. But here is my Lord Asander. He looks cast down enough, in all conscience.

Enter ASANDER.

Well, Prince, hast thou seen the lady?

Asan. Speak not to me of her, I pray.

I must leave this accursed place at once and for ever, and must take my wife with me. Once in Bosphorus, I may know again the happiness which is denied me here. I will not stay here a day. Is there any ship from Bosphorus in harbour? Get me away to-night secretly, and the Lady Gycia with me.

Lys. My lord, there are many ships here from Bosphorus, but none empty or which can be spared now; but it wants but two days to the festival, and if thou wilt tarry until then, it may be we can so arrange that either thou mayst set sail for Bosphorus at will or bring Bosphorus hither at will.

Asan. What do these words mean? You speak in riddles. I care not what becomes of me, but remember my honour, Lysimachus, my honour! If any scheme against the State of Cherson is in your mind, I will have none of it. I want nothing of these people, only to be allowed to turn my back upon them and their intrigues for ever, and to carry the wife whom I love far away from the air of chicane and base deceit which makes this Cherson a hell.

Lys. My Lord Asander, thou hast not forgot
Thy oath which thou didst swear ere first you left
Our Bosphorus, that, come what fate should come,
Thou wouldst not forget her. Now, as Fate would have it,
These gentlemen and I, hearing report Of the grand festival which now approaches,
Have ta'en such measures as may make our city
Mistress of this her rival. Day by day

Ships laden deep with merchandise
cast anchor

By Lamachus's palace, and unload
At dead of night their tale of armèd
men,

And by to-morrow night, which is the
eve

Of the feast, five hundred men-at-arms
or more

In a dark hall, long empty and disused,
These fools deem haunted, where the
sounds they make

Seem not of earth, and none draw near
to hear,

Will lie concealed. These, when the
festival

Has spent itself, and the drowsed
citizens,

Heavy with meat and wine, are fast
asleep,

Will issue forth at midnight and will
seize

The guardians of the gates, and throw
them open

To an o'erwhelming force which fills
the ships

Which lie within the harbour. For the
rest,

Cherson is ours, thou free to go or stay,
King if thou wilt; but this, my lord,

know well—

Even if thou hast no reverence for thy
oath,

No power on earth can free thee from
thy bonds

Or speed thee hence, if still this cursèd
State

Keeps its free power. Therefore, look
well to it.

Asan. I cannot do this thing. I
am no thief

Or midnight murderer, but a prince and
soldier.

Place me in open battle, and I care
not

For bloodshed; but this murderous
intrigue,

I will have none o't.

Lys. Nay, my lord, in sooth,
Why think of bloodshed? If our
scheme go right

(And nought can mar it now), what
need of blood?

These smooth knaves, though they
fight behind their walls

With cunning enginery, yet when they
see

Our army in their streets, will straight
grow prudent

And hug discretion. But, indeed, my
lord,

We have gone too far to pause, and if
thou like not

Our scheme, which makes for thee and
for our State,

We cannot risk that thou denounce our
plan,

And therefore, if thou wilt not join with
us,

The safety of ourselves and of the
State

Holds thee a prisoner pent in close
duress

Till victory is ours, and thou mayst
take

The fruit of others' daring, while thy
wife

Deserts her doubting and dishonoured
lord

For one who dares to act and play his
part

As a man should.

Asan. (after hesitation). I do not
hold with you,

That a man's oath can bind him to his
God

To do what else were wrong. Yet,
 since you swear
 Your purpose is not bloodshed, and my
 will
 Is impotent to stay your choice, and
 chiefly
 Because I am cast down and sick at
 heart,
 And without any trust in God or man,
 I do consent to your conspiracy,
 Loving it not.

Lys. There spoke my lord the
 Prince.

We will succeed or die.

Asan. I would sooner die.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—CHERSON. IRENE'S PRISON.

IRENE; *then the Gaoler's Child; afterwards* GYCIA.

Ire. Ah me! The heaviness of
 prisoned days!

Heigho! 'Tis weary work in prison
 here.

What though I know no loss but
 liberty,

Have everything at will—food, service,
 all

That I should have, being free—yet
 doth'constraint

Poison life 'at its spring; and if I
 thought

This woman's jealous humour would
 endure,

I would sooner be a hireling set to tend
 The kine upon the plains, in heat or
 cold,

Chilled through by the sharp east,
 scorched by the sun,

So only I might wander as I would
 At my own will, than weary to be free
 From this luxurious cell. Hark!

[*The tramp of armed men is heard.*]

What was that sound?

I could swear I heard the measured
 tramp of men

And ring of mail, yet is it but illusion.
 Last night I thought I heard it as I lay
 Awake at dead of night. Mere fantasy
 Born of long solitude, for here there are
 No soldiers nor mailed feet.

[*Again heard.*]

Hark! once again.

Nay, I must curb these fancies.

Enter Child.

Child. Gentle lady.

Ire. Speak, little one. Come
 hither.

Child. Gentle lady,
 My father, who is Warder of this
 tower,

Bade me come hither and ask thee if
 thou wouldst

That I should hold thy distaff, or might
 render

Some other service.

Ire. Ay, child; a good thought.
 Bring me my spinning-wheel.

[*Child brings it.*]

Ire. (spinning). The light is fading
 fast, but I would choose
 This twilight, if thou wilt not be afraid
 Of the darkness, little one.

Child. Nay, that I am not,
 With one so good as thou.

Ire. Nay, child, it may be
 I am not all thou think'st me.

Child. But, dear lady,
 Are not all noble ladies good?

Ire. Not all,
 Nor many, maybe.

Child. To be sure they are not,
Else were they not imprisoned.

Ire. Little one,
Not all who pine in prison are not good,
Nor innocent who go free.

Child. The Lady Gycia,
Is she not good?

Ire. It may be that she is.
'Tis a vile world, my child.

Child. Nay, I am sure
The Lady Gycia is as white and pure
As are the angels. When my mother
died

She did commend me to her, and she
promised
To keep me always.

Ire. But she sent me here.

Child. Ah! lady, then I fear thou
art not good.
I am sorry for thee.

Ire. So, my child, am I.
[*The tramp of armed feet is heard again.*]

Child. Ah! lady, what is that? I
am afraid.

Didst hear the ghostly feet.

Ire. What heardst thou, child?

Child. A tramp of armèd men and
ring of mail.

Ire. Then, 'tis no fancy of my weary
brain.

If it comes again I must inquire into it.
'Tis passing strange. Be not afraid,
my child.

'Twas but the wind which echoed
through the void

Of the vast storehouses below us.
Come, [Spinning.

Let us to spinning. Twirl and twirl
and twirl;

'Tis a strange task.

Child. Lady, I love it dearly.
My mother span, and I would sit by her
The livelong day.

Ire. Didst ever hear the tale
Of the Fates and how they spin?

Child. I do not think so.
Wilt tell me?

Ire. There were three weird sisters
once,

Clotho and Lachesis and Atropos,
Who spun the web of fate for each new
life,

Sometimes, as I do now, a brighter
thread

Woven with the dark, and sometimes
black as night,

Until at last came Atropos and cut
The fine-worn life-thread thus.

[*Cuts the thread; the head of the spindle
rolls away.*]

Child. And hast thou cut
Some life-thread now?

Ire. My child, I am no Fate,
And yet I know not; but the spindle's
head

Rolled hence to yonder corner. Let us
seek it.

Hast found it?

Child. Nay, there is so little light,
I think that it has fallen in the crevice
Beneath yon panel.

Ire. Stoop and seek it, child.
Perchance the panel slides, and then,
it may be,

We shall let in the light.

[*Draws back the panel and discovers a
bright light, files of armed men,
and ASANDER in the midst.*]

Child. Ay, there it is;
We have it, we have found it.

[*Sliding panel back again.*]

Ire. What have we found?
What have we found? Yes, little one,
'tis found!

Run away now—I fain would be
alone—

And come back presently.

[*Kisses Child, who goes.*]

These were the sounds
I heard and thought were fancy's. All
is clear

As is the blaze of noon. The Prince
Asander

Is traitor to the State, and will o'er-
whelm it

When all the citizens are sunk in sleep
After to-morrow's feast. Well, what
care I?

He is not for me, whether we call him
King

Or Archon; and for these good men of
Cherson,

What is their fate to me? If he
succeed,

As now he must, since no one knows
the secret,

'Twill only be a change of name—no
more.

The King and Queen will hold a
statelier Court

And live contented when the thing is
done,

And that is all. For who will call it
treason

When victory crowns the plot? But
stay! a gleam

Of new-born hope. What, what if it
should fail

As I could make it fail? What if this
woman,

Full of fantastic reverence for the dead,
And nourished on her cold republican
dream,

Should learn the treason ere 'twas done
and mar it?

Would not Asander hate her for the
failure?

And she him for the plot? I know her
well,

I know her love for him, but well I
know

She is so proud of her Athenian blood
And of this old republic, she would
banish

Her love for less than this. Once
separated,

The Prince safe over seas in Bosphorus,
His former love turned to injurious
pride,

I might prevail! I would!

Re-enter CHILD.

Nay, little one,
We will spin no more to-day. I prithee
go

And seek the Lady Gycia. Say to her,
By all the memory of our former love
I pray that she will come to me at
once.

Lose not a moment. [*Exit Child.*]

Hark! the tramp again;
Again the ring of mail. I wonder
much

If she shall hear it first, or first the eye
Shall lay her love within her.

Enter GYCIA.

Gycia. Thou dost ask
My presence; wherefore is it?

Ire. *Gycia,*
Thou dost not love me, yet would I
requite

Thy wrong with kindness. That thy
love was false

To thee, thou knowest, but it may be
still

There is a deeper falsehood than to
thee,

And thou shalt know it. Dost thou
hear that sound?

[*The tramp of men again heard.*]
What means it, think you?

Gycia. Nay, I cannot tell.
'Tis like the tramp of armèd men.

Ire. It is ;
And who are they ?

Gycia. Young citizens of Cherson,
Maybe, rehearsing for to-morrow's
pageant

And the procession. [*Going.*

Ire. Stay, thou stubborn woman,
Canst bear to see, though the sight
blight thy life ?

Gycia. I know not what thou
wouldst, but I can bear it.

Ire. Though it prove thy love a
traitor ?

Gycia. That it will not !

Ire. Then, make no sound, but see
what I will show thee.
Look now ! Behold thy love !

[*Draws back panel, and discovers*
ASANDER with the soldiers of
Bosphorus standing in line.
ASANDER'S voice heard.

Asan. At stroke of midnight
To-morrow night be ready.

Soldiers. Ay, my lord.

[*GYCIA tottering back. IRENE slides*
back the panel, and GYCIA sets
her back against it, half faint-
ing ; IRENE regarding her with
triumph.

Gycia. Was that my husband ? and
those men around him
Soldiers of Bosphorus, to whom he
gave

Some swift command ? What means
it all, ye saints ?

What means it ? This the husband of
my love,

Upon whose breast I have lain night
by night

For two sweet years—my husband
whom my father

Loved as a son, whose every thought I
knew,

Or deemed I did, lurking in ambush
here

Upon the eve of our great festival,
Scheming some bloody treachery to take
Our Cherson in the toils ? Oh, 'tis
too much ;

I cannot trust my senses ! 'Twas a
dream !

Ire. No dream, but dreadful truth !

Gycia. Thou cruel woman,
How have I harmed thee, thou shouldst
hate me thus ?

But 'twas no dream. Why was it else
that he,

But for some hateful treachery, devised
This festival ? Why was it that he grew
So anxious to go hence and take me
with him,

But that guilt made him coward, and
he feared

To see his work ? Oh, love for ever
lost,

And with it faith gone out ! what is't
remains

But duty, though the path be rough
and trod

By bruised and bleeding feet ? Oh,
what is it

Is left for me in life but death alone,
Which ends it ?

Ire. Gycia, duty bids thee banish
Thy love to his own State, and then
disclose

The plot thou hast discovered. It may
be

That thou mayst join him yet, and yet
grow happy.

Gycia. Never ! For duty treads
another path

Than that thou knowest. I am my
father's daughter.

It is not mine to pardon or condemn ;
That is the State's alone. 'Tis for the
State

To banish, not for me, and therefore
surely

I must denounce these traitors to the
Senate,

And leave the judgment theirs.

Ire. (kneeling). Nay, nay, I pray
thee,

Do not this thing ! Thou dost not know
how cruel

Is State-craft, or what cold and stony
hearts

Freeze in their politic breasts.

Gycia. *Thou kneel'st to me*
To spare my husband ! Think'st thou
I love him less

Than thou dost, wanton ?

Ire. Gycia, they will kill him.
Get him away to-night to Bosphorus.
Thou dost not know these men !

Gycia. *I know them not ?*
I who have lived in Cherson all my
days,

And trust the State ? Nay, I will get
me hence,

And will denounce this treason to the
Senate.

There lies my duty clear, and I will
do it ;

I fear not for the rest. The State is
clement

To vanquished foes, and doubtless will
find means

To send them hence in safety. For
myself

I know not what may come—a broken
heart,

Maybe, and death to mend it. But
for thee,

Thou shameless wanton, if thou breathe
a sound

Or make a sign to them, thou diest to-
night

With torture.

Ire. Spare him ! Do not this
thing, Gycia ! [*Exit GYCIA.*

O God, she is gone ! he is lost ! and I
undone ! [*Swoons.*

SCENE II.—ROOM IN LAMACHUS'S
PALACE.

LYSIMACHUS, MEGACLES, Courtiers ;
afterwards ASANDER.

Lys. Well, good Megacles, I hope
you are prepared to carry out your
function. It will be a busy and anxious
day to-morrow, no doubt, and most of
us will be glad when midnight strikes.

Meg. My Lord Lysimachus, I hope
so. I have not closed an eye for the
last two nights. As to the Procession,
I flatter myself that no better-arranged
pomp has ever defiled before Cæsar's
Palace. It will be long, it will be
splendid, it will be properly marshalled.
There is no other man in the Empire
who knows the distinctions of rank or
the mysteries of marshalling better than
I do. Look at the books I have studied.
There is the treatise of the Learned and
Respectable Symmachus on Processions.
That is one. There is the late divine
Emperor Theodosius on Dignities and
Titles of Honour. That is two. There
is our Learned and Illustrious Cham-
berlain Procopius's treatise on the
office and duties of a Count of the
Palace. That, as no doubt you know,
is in six large volumes. That is three,
or, nay, eight volumes. Oh, my poor
head ! And I have said nothing of the
authorities on Costume—a library, I

assure you, in themselves. Yes, it has been an anxious time, but a very happy one. I wish our young friends here would devote a little more time to such serious topics, and less to such frivolities as fighting and making love. The latter is a fine art, no doubt, and, when done according to rule, is well enough; but as for fighting, getting oneself grimed with dust and sweat, and very likely some vulgar churl's common blood to boot—pah! it is intolerable to think of it.

1st Court. Ah! good Megacles, I am afraid that the world cannot spare its soldiers yet for many years to come. So long as there is evil in the world, and lust of power and savagery and barbarism, so long, depend upon it, there is room and need for the soldier.

Meg. Certainly, my lord, certainly; and besides, they are very highly decorative too. Nothing looks better to my mind at a banquet than bright gay faces and lithe young figures set in a shining framework of mail. By the way, my Lord Lysimachus, it was kind of you to provide our procession with a strong detachment of fine young soldiers from Bosphorus. I have secured a prominent place for them, and the effect will be perfect. I trust the Lady Melissa will like it.

Lys. My lord, you are mistaken; there are no soldiers from Bosphorus here.

Meg. But I was with the Prince last night, and saw them.

Lys. I tell you you are mistaken. There are none here. Do you understand me? There are none here.

2nd Court. Nay, indeed, my Lord Megacles. We were trying, with a

view to the pageant, how a number of young men of Cherson would look in the array of Bosphorus; but we gave it up, since we feared that they would bear them so clumsily that they would mar the whole effect.

Meg. Ah, that explains it; quite right, quite right. Well, I see I was mistaken. But I wish I could have had soldiers from Bosphorus. They are the one thing wanting to make to-morrow a perfect success, as the Lady Melissa said.

Lys. They are indeed, as you say. But, my Lord Megacles, pray do not whisper abroad what you have said here; these people are so jealous. They would grow sullen, and spoil the pageant altogether.

Meg. Ah, my lord, you have a good head. I will not breathe a word of it till the day is done.

Lys. Thanks, my lord, and as I know you will be weary with the long day's work and your great anxieties, I am going to lay a little friendly compulsion upon you. You must leave the banquet to-morrow and go to rest by eleven o'clock at latest.

Meg. Well, my lord, I am not so young as I was, and if I have your permission to leave before all is over, well and good. No one knows what an anxious day is before me, and I have no doubt I shall have earned my night's rest by then. But I have much yet to do, so with your permission I will wish you good night.

[*Exit MEGACLES, bowing low to each with exaggerated gestures.*]

Lys. Poor soul, poor soul! If any fight comes, it would be as cruel to let him take his part with men as it would be if he were a woman or a child.

Enter ASANDER.

Welcome, my Lord Asander. Hast thou seen our men, and are they ready for to-morrow?

Asan. I have just come from them, and they are ready, But I am not. I pray you, let this be;

Send back these men to-night. I am oppressed

By such o'ermastering presages of ill As baffle all resolve.

Lys. My Lord Asander, It is too late. Wouldst thou, then, break thy oath?

Wouldst thou live here a prisoner, nor behold

Thy father, though he die? Wouldst thou thy country

Should spurn thee as the traitor whose malignance

Blighted her hard-won gains? It is too late!

It is too late!

Asan. I am grown infirm of will As any dotard. I will go on now So that thou dost no murder.

Lys. Why was it We came in such o'erwhelming force, but that

We sought to shed no blood?

Asan. I will be ready, Though with a heavy heart. To-morrow night

At stroke of twelve, when all the feast is done,

And all asleep, we issue from the palace,

Seize the guards at their posts, and open wide

The gates to the strong force which from the ships

At the same hour shall land. The citizens,

Heavy with wine, will wake to find their city

Our own beyond recall.

Lys. Ay, that's the scheme, And nought can mar it now. Good night, my lord.

Sleep well; there is much to do.

Asan. Good night, my lords! [*Exit ASANDER.*]

Lys. No bloodshed! Why, what fools love makes of men!

I have seen this very lad dash through the ranks

Of hostile spearmen, cut and hack and thrust

As in sheer sport. There will be blood shed, surely,

Unless these dogs have lost their knack of war

As he has; but we have them unprepared,

And shall prevail, and thou shalt be avenged,

My father slain, and thou, my murdered brother,

Shalt be avenged! My lords, you know what work

Is given each to do. Be not too chary

Of your men's swords; let them strike sudden terror.

Slay all who do resist, or if they do not,

Yet slay them still. My lords, give you good night.

To-morrow at midnight, at the stroke of twelve—

At the stroke of twelve!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE III.—THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
OF THE SENATE OF CHERSON.

ZETHO and Senators ; afterwards
GYCIA.

Zet. Most worthy brethren, Senators
of Cherson,
In great perplexity of mind and will
I summon ye to-night. The Lady
Gycia,
Our Lamachus's daughter, sends re-
quest,
Urgent as 'twere of instant life and
death,
That I should call ye here. What care
can move
Such anxious thought in her, on this the
eve
Of the high festival herself has founded,
I know not, but 'twould seem the very
air
Is full of floating rumours, vague alarms,
Formless suspicions which elude the
grasp,
Unspoken presages of coming ill
Which take no shape. For whence
should danger come ?
We are at peace with all. Our former
foe
Is now our dearest friend ; the Prince
Asander,
Though of a hasty spirit and high
temper,
Dwells in such close, concordant har-
mony
With his loved wife that he is wholly
ours ;
And yet though thus at peace, rumours
of war
And darkling plots beset us. Is it not
thus ?
Have ye heard aught ?

1st Sen. Zetho, 'tis true. Last
night, a citizen
Sware he heard clang of arms and ring
of mail

At midnight by the house of Lamachus !

2nd Sen. My freedman, coming
home at grey of dawn,
Saw a strange ship unload her mer-
chandise,

And one bale chanced to fall, and from
it came

Groanings and drops of blood !

3rd Sen. Two nights ago,
The ways being white with snow, I on
the quay

Saw the thick-planted marks of armèd
feet ;

But, rising with the dawn, I found the
place

Swept clean with care !

Zet. Brethren, I know not what
These things portend.

Enter GYCIA.

But see, she comes ! Good daughter,
Why is thy cheek so pale ?

Gycia. This is the wont
Of women. Grief drives every drop of
blood

Back to the breaking heart, which love
calls forth

To mantle on the cheek. Sirs, I have
come

On such an errand as might drive a
woman

Stronger than I to madness ; I have
come

To tell you such a tale as well might
fetter

My tongue and leave me speechless.
Pity me

If I do somewhat wander in my
talk !

'Tis scarce an hour ago, that in my house,
 Drawing some secret panel in the wall,
 I saw the long hall filled with armed men
 Of Bosphorus, and at their head—O Heaven,
 I cannot say it !—at their head I saw
 My husband, my Asander, my own love,
 [Senators *rise with strong emotion.*
 Who ordered them and bade them all
 stand ready
 To-morrow night at midnight. What
 means this ?
 What else than that these traitorous
 bands shall slay
 Our Cherson's liberties, and give to murder
 Our unsuspecting people, whom the feast
 Leaves unprepared for war ? I pray
 you, sirs,
 Lose not one moment. Call the citizens
 To arms while yet 'tis time ! Defeat
 this plot !
 Do justice on these traitors ! Save the
 city,
 Though I am lost !
Zet. Daughter, thy loyal love
 To our dear city calls for grateful honour
 From us who rule. In thy young veins
 the blood
 Of patriot Lamachus flows to-day as
 strong
 As once it did in his ; nay, the warm
 tide
 Which stirred the lips of bold Demos-
 thenes
 And all that dauntless band who of old
 time
 Gave heart and life for Athens, still is
 thine

In our Hellenic story, there is none
 Who has done more than thou, who
 hast placed love,
 Wedlock, and queenly rule, and all
 things dear
 To a tender woman's heart, below the
 State—
 A patriot before all. Is there no favour
 A State preserved may grant thee ?
Gycia. Noble Zetho,
 I ask but this. I know my husband's
 heart,
 How true it was and loyal. He is
 led,
 I swear, by evil counsels to this crime :
 And maybe, though I seek not to ex-
 cuse him,
 It was the son's love for his dying sire,
 Whom he should see no more, that
 scheming men
 Have worked on to his ruin. Banish
 him
 To his own city, though it break my
 heart,
 But harm him not ; and for those
 wretched men
 Whose duty 'tis to obey, shed not their
 blood,
 But let the vengeance of our city fall
 Upon the guilty only.
Zet. Brethren all,
 Ye hear what 'tis she asks, and though
 to grant it
 Is difficult indeed, yet her petition
 Comes from the saviour of the State. I
 think
 We well may grant her prayer. Though
 well I know
 How great the danger, yet do I believe
 It may be done. Is it so, worthy
 brethren ?
 [Senators *nod assent.*
 Daughter, thy prayer is granted.

Gycia. Sirs, I thank you ;
I love you for your mercy.

Zet. For the rest,
I counsel that we do not rouse the city.
'Twere of no use to-night to set our
arms,

Blunt with long peace and rusted with
disuse,

Against these banded levies. By to-
morrow—

And we are safe till then—we shall
have time

To league together such o'erwhelming
force

As may make bloodshed needless, vain
their plot,

And mercy possible. Meantime, dear
lady,

Breathe not a word of what thine eyes
have seen,

But bear thyself as though thou hadst
seen nothing,

And had no care excepting to do honour
To thy dead sire ; and when the weary
day

Tends to its close, school thou thy heavy
heart,

And wear what mask of joy thou canst,
and sit

Smiling beside thy lord at the high
feast,

Where all will meet. See that his cup
is filled

To the brim ; drink healths to Bosphorus
and Cherson.

Seem thou to drink thyself, having a
goblet

Of such a colour as makes water blush
Rosy as wine. When all the strangers'
eyes

Grow heavy, then, some half an hour
or more

From midnight, rise as if to go to rest,

Bid all good night, and thank them for
their presence.

Then, issuing from the banquet-hall,
lock fast

The great doors after thee, and bring
the key

To us, who here await thee. Thus
shalt thou

Save this thy State, and him thy love,
and all.

For we will, ere the fateful midnight
comes,

Send such o'erwhelming forces to sur-
round them

That they must needs surrender, and
ere dawn

Shall be long leagues away. We will
not shed

A drop of blood, my daughter.

Gycia. Noble Zetho,

I thank you and these worthy senators.

I knew you would be merciful. I thank
you,

And will obey in all things.

[Exit GYCIA.

Bardanes, 1st Sen. She is gone ;

I durst not speak before her. Dost
thou know,

Good Zetho, how infirm for war our
State

After long peace has grown ? I doubt
if all

The men whom we might arm before
the hour

Are matched in numbers with those
murderous hordes ;

While in experience of arms, in training,
In everything that makes a soldier
strong,

We are no match for them. Our para-
mount duty

Is to the State alone, not to these
pirates

Who lie in wait to slay us ; nor to one
 Who, woman-like, knows not our
 strength or weakness,
 Nor cares, if only she might wring a
 promise
 To spare her traitorous love. But we
 have arts
 Which these barbarians know not,
 quenchless fires
 Which in one moment can enwrap
 their stronghold
 In one red ring of ruin. My counsel
 is,
 That ere the hour of midnight comes
 we place
 Around the palace walls on every
 side
 Such store of fuel and oils and cunning
 drugs
 As at one sign may leap a wall of
 fire
 Impassable, and burn these hateful
 traitors
 Like hornets in their nest.

Zetho. Good brethren all,
 Is this your will? Is it faith? Is it
 honour, think you,
 To one who has given all, for us to
 break

Our solemn plighted word?

2nd Sen. We will not break it ;
 We shed no drop of blood. The State
 demands it ;

The safety of the State doth override
 All other claim. The safety of the
 State

Is more than all !

All the Senators, with uplifted arms.

Ay, Zetho, more than all !

Zetho. Then, be it as you will. See,
 therefore, to it ;

Take measures that your will be done,
 not mine.

Though I approve not, yet I may not
 set

My will against the universal voice.

Save us our Cherson. For the rest I
 care not,

Only I grieve to break our solemn
 promise

To Lamachus's child. Poor heart !
 poor heart !

ACT V.

SCENE I.—OUTSIDE LAMACHUS'S PALACE.

MEGACLES, LYSIMACHUS, Courtiers,
 and Citizens of Cherson.

Meg. Oh, this has been a happy
 day. All has gone admirably. Not a
 hitch in all the arrangements. Pre-
 cedence kept, rank observed, dresses
 all they should be. I do not, I really
 do not think, though I say it who
 should not, that the Imperial Chamber-
 lain at Constantinople could have con-
 ducted the matter better.

1st Court. Nay, that he could not,
 good Megacles. Let us hope that
 what remains to do will go as smoothly.

Meg. What remains? Doubtless you
 mean the banquet. That is all arranged
 long ago under three heads. First, the
 order of entering the hall ; second, the
 order of the seats ; third, the order of
 going forth.

Lys. Doubtless the last will arrange
 itself. Remember, the only order of
 going to be observed is this, that thou
 get thyself gone, and all the guests from
 Cherson gone, fully half an hour before
 midnight.

Meg. But, my lord, that is impos-

sible; you ask too much. How long do you suppose it will take, at a moderate computation, to get one hundred men of ill-defined rank out of a room with a decent regard for Precedence. Why, I have seen it take an hour at the Palace, where everybody knew his place, and here I cannot undertake to do it under two.

Lys. My friend, you will get it done; you will waive ceremony. None but the Prince and ourselves must remain within half an hour of midnight, and the hall must be cleared.

Meg. Ah, well, my Lord Lysimachus, the responsibility rests with you; I will have none of it. It is as much as my reputation is worth. But if I do this, cannot you let me have a guard of honour of armed men to stand at intervals along the hall. I have been longing for them all day.

Lys. (angrily). Peace, fool! I have told you before we have no soldiers here.

[*People of Cherson overhearing him.*]

1st Cit. Didst hear that old man? He believes there are soldiers here. Whence do they come? and why did the other check him?

Meg. Well, my Lord Lysimachus, if not soldiers, men-at-arms, and these there certainly are, and highly decorative too.

2nd Cit. I hate these Bosphorians. What if the rumour should be true? Pass the word to the citizens that they sleep not to-night, but keep their arms ready for what may come. We are a match for them, whatever may be their design. To-morrow we will probe this matter to its depths.

2nd Court. Depend upon it, there

is no time to lose if we would forestall these fellows. But here comes the procession to the banqueting-hall.

[*Citizens going to banquet two and two.*]

Meg. (with a gold wand). This way, gentlemen; this way, masters and mistresses; this way, Respectables!

[*Accompanies them to the end of the stage towards the banqueting-hall in the distance. Returns to escort another party. Musicians, etc.*]

Enter Senators, two and two.

Meg. (bowing profoundly three times). Most Illustrious Senators! this way, your Highnesses; this way.

Enter MELISSA and other Ladies.

[*To MELISSA*] Fairest and loveliest of your adorable sex, your slave prostrates himself before your stainless and beatific feet (*bowing low and kissing his fingers*). Illustrious Ladies, I pray you to advance.

Lys. (with Courtiers standing apart). A good appetite, my friends. Enjoy yourselves while you may.

Bard. We are quite ready, my Lord Lysimachus. Are you not (*with a sneer*) for the banquet?

Lys. In good time, in good time. If they only knew. [*Aside.*]

Bard. (overhearing). If you knew all, my friends.

Meg. (returning). I pray you, most Illustrious Senators, to excuse the absence of a guard of honour.

Bard. Nay, nay; we are peaceful people, and have no armed men nearer than Bosphorus, as my Lord Lysimachus knows. There are plenty in that favoured State, no doubt.

Lys. (confused). What does this insolence mean? I would the hour were come.

Enter ZETHO, with his retinue.

Meg. Your Gravity, Your Sincerity, Your Sublime and Wonderful Magnitude, Your Illustrious and Magnificent Highness, I prostrate myself before Your Altitude. Will You deign to walk this way?

Zetho. My lord, I am no Cæsar, but a simple citizen of Cherson, called by my fellows to preside over the State. Use not to me these terms, I pray of you, but lead on quickly.

Meg. I prostrate myself before Your Eminence.

Enter ASANDER and GYCIA.

Meg. (returning). Noble Prince, will your Illustrious Consort and your-self deign to follow me?

Asan. Nay, good Megacles, will you and these gentlemen go first, I have a word to say to the Lady Gycia. We will be with you before the guests are seated.

Meg. I obey, my Lord Asander, and will await you at the door.

[MEGACLES, LYSIMACHUS, and the rest, pass on.]

Asan. Gycia, though we have passed from amity
And all our former love, yet would I pray you,
By our sweet years of wedded happiness,
Give ear to me a moment. It may be
That some great shock may come to set our lives
For evermore apart.

Gycia. Ah yes, Asander—
For evermore apart!

Asan. And I would fain,
If it must be, that thou shouldst know to-night

That never any woman on the earth
Held me one moment in the toils of love

Except my wife.

Gycia. What! not Irene's self?

Asan. Never, I swear by Heaven.

She was a woman

In whom a hopeless passion burnt the springs

Of maiden modesty. I never gave her
The solace of a smile.

Gycia. Dost thou say this?

Is thy soul free from all offence with her,
If thou camest now to judgment?

Asan. Ay, indeed,

Free as a child's.

Gycia. Oh, my own love! my dear!
Ah no! too late, too late!

[Embraces him.]

Asan. I ask thee not
Counter assurance, since I know thy truth.

Gycia. Speakest thou of Theodorus?
He loved me

Before I knew thee, but I loved no man
Before I met Asander. When he knelt
That day, it was in pity for my grief,
Thinking thee false, and all his buried love

Burst into passionate words, which on
the instant

I as thy wife repelled.

Asan. Oh, perfect woman!

[They embrace.]

O God, it is too late! Come, let us go;
The guests are waiting for us. What
can Fate

Devise to vanquish Love. [Exeunt.]

Enter two drunken Labourers of Cherson, bearing faggots and straw.

1st Lab. Well, friend, what kind of day has it been with you?

2nd Lab. Oh, a white day, a happy day! Plenty of food, plenty of wine, raree shows without end, such processions as were never seen—the very model of a democracy; nothing to pay, and everybody made happy at the expense of the State. I have lived in Cherson, man and boy, for fifty years, and I never saw anything to compare with it. Here's good luck to Lamachus's memory, say I, and I should like to celebrate his lamented decease as often as his daughter likes.

1st Lab. Didst know him, citizen?

2nd Lab. No, not I. He has been dead these two years. Time he was forgotten, I should think. They don't commemorate poor folk with all these fal-lals and follies.

1st Lab. Well, citizen, there is one comfort—the great people don't enjoy themselves as we do. Did you ever see such a set of melancholy, frowning, anxious faces as the grandees carried with them to-day? And as for the Prince and the Lady Gycia, I don't believe they spoke a word the livelong day, though they walked together. That is the way with these grandees. When you and I quarrel with our wives, it is hammer and tongs for five minutes, and then kiss and make friends.

2nd Lab. And fancy being drilled by that old fool from Bosphorus—"Most Illustrious, this is your proper place;" "Respectable sir, get you back there" (*mimics MEGACLES*), and so forth.

1st Lab. Well, well, it is good to be

content. But I warrant we are the only two unhappy creatures in Cherson to-night, who have the ill fortune to be sober. And such wine too, and nothing to pay!

2nd Lab. Never mind, citizen, we shall be paid in meal or malt, I dare say, and we are bound to keep sober. By the way, it is a curiously contrived bonfire this.

1st Lab. It will be the crowning triumph of the whole festival, the senator said.

2nd Lab. But who ever heard of a bonfire on a large scale like this, so close to an old building? You know our orders: we are to place lines of faggots and straw close to the building on every side, well soaked with oil, and certain sealed vessels full of a secret compound in the midst of them. And just before midnight we are to run with torches and set light to the whole bonfire, to amuse the noble guests at the banquet.

[*IRENE at a window, overhearing.*

1st Lab. Ah! do you not see? It is a device of the Senate to startle our friends from Bosphorus. The faggots and straw blaze up fiercely round the wall; then, when all is confusion, the substance in the sealed vessels escapes and at once puts out the fire, and the laugh is with us. Our friends from Bosphorus know what we can do in chemistry before now.

2nd Lab. Faith, a right merry device! Ha! ha! What a head thou hast, citizen! Well, we must go on with our work. Lay the faggots evenly.

Ire. (at the window above). Great God! what is this?

We are doomed to die!

Good friends,
Know you my brother, the Lord Theodorus?

I have something urgent I would say to him.

I will write it down, and you shall give it him

When he comes forth from the banquet.

[*Disappears.*]

1st Lab. Good my lady. Her brother, too, she calls him. I go bail it is her lover, and this is an assignation. Well, well, we poor men must not be too particular.

2nd Lab. No, indeed; but let us get on with our work, or we shall never finish in time.

Ire. (*reappearing*). Here it is. Give it him, I pray, when he comes forth. 'Tis a thing of life and death.

1st Lab. So they all think,
Poor love-sick fools!

Ire. See, here is gold for you—
'Tis all I have; but he will treble it,
If you fail not.

1st Lab. Lady, we shall be here,
We must be here. Fear not, we shall
not miss him.

SCENE II.—THE BANQUET HALL.

At a table, on a dais, ZETHO, ASANDER, GYCIA, and Senators; LYSIMACHUS, and Courtiers of Bosphorus. Magistrates of Cherson at cross tables. ASANDER, LYSIMACHUS, the Courtiers, and Senators seem flushed with wine.

Zetho. I drink to him whose
gracious memory
We celebrate to-day. In all our Cherson,

Which boasts descent from the Athenian
race,

Who one time swayed the world, there
was no man,

Nor ever had been, fired with deeper
love

Of this our city, or more heartfelt
pride

In our republican rule (*LYSIMACHUS sneers*), which freeborn men

Prize more than life. I do not seek to
bind

Those who, long nurtured under kingly
rule,

Give to the Man the love we bear the
State;

But never shall the name of King be
heard

In this our Cherson.

Lys. Archon, 'twere unwise
To risk long prophecies.

Bard. Be silent, sir,
If you would not offend.

Zetho, I bid you all
Drink to the memory of Lamachus
And weal to our Republic.

Lys. Shall we drink
Its memory, for it has not long to live,
If it be still alive?

Bard. It will outlive thee.
Thou hast not long to live.

Lys. Longer than thou,
If swords be sharp.

Zetho. I pray you, gentlemen,
Bandy not angry words.

Gycia. My Lord Asander,
Thy cup is empty. Shall I fill it for
thee?

Thou lovedst Lamachus?

Asan. Ay, that I did;
And I love thee. But I have drunk
enough.

I must keep cool to-night.

Gycia. Nay ; see, I fill
My glass to drink with thee.

Asan. Well, well, I drink,
But not to the Republic.

Gycia. Ah ! my lord,
There is a gulf still yawns 'twixt thee
and me

Which not the rapture of recovered love
Can ever wholly bridge. To my dead
father

I drink, and the Republic !

Lys. Which is dead.

Bard. Nay, sir, but living, and
shall live when thou
Liest rotting with thy schemes.

Enter MEGACLES.

Meg. My Lord Asander,
A messenger from Bosphorus, just
landed,
Has bid me give thee this.

[*Gives ASANDER letter.*]

Asan. (reading) "My Lord, the
King
Is dead, asking for thee." Oh,
wretched day !
Had I but gone to him, and left this
place
Of sorrow ere he died !

Gycia. My love, my dear !
Thou wilt go hence too late. I would
indeed

The law had let thee go. Sorrow like
this

Draws parted lives in one, and knits
anew

The rents which time has made.

Lys. The King is dead !
Ay, then long live the King of Bos-
phorus !

And more ere long !

Bard. Think you that he will live
To wear his crown ?

Zetho. Brethren, the hour is late,
And draws to midnight, and 'tis time
that all

Should rest for whom rest is. (*To*
BARDANES aside) We must con-
sider

What change of policy this weighty
change

Which makes Asander King may work
in us.

Bard. (aside). Nay, nay, no change !
He is a murderer still,
And shall be punished were he thrice
a king.

Asan. Good night to all. And
thou, good Megacles,
Thou wert my father's servant, take thy
rest.

Go hence with these.

Meg. I have no heart to marshal
These dignitaries forth. My King is
dead ;

I am growing old and spent.

Zetho. Daughter, remember
Thy duty to the State.

Gycia. I will, good Zetho.
I am my father's daughter. Gentle
Sirs

And Ladies all, good night.

[*Exeunt omnes except ASANDER and*
GYCIA ; LYSIMACHUS and Cour-
tiers by one door, then the Cher-
sonites by another opposite.]

Asan. Dearest of women,
How well this fair head will become a
crown !

I know not how it is, but now this blow
Has fallen, it does not move me as I
thought.

I am as those who come in tottering
age

Even to life's verge, whom loss of
friend or child

Touches not deeply, since the dead
they love

Precede them but a stage upon the road
Which they shall tread to-morrow.

Yet am I

Young, and thou too, my Gycia; we
should walk

The path of life together many years,
But that some strange foreboding
troubles me.

For oh, my dear! now that the sun of
love

Beams on our days again, my worth-
less life

Grows precious, and I tremble like a
coward

At dangers I despised. Tell me, my
Gycia,

Though I am true in love, wouldst thou
forgive me

If I were false or seemed false to thy
State?

Hast thou no word for me? May I
not tell thee

My secret, which so soon all men shall
know,

And ask thy pardon for it?

Gycia. Say on, Asander.

Asan. Know, then, that soldiers
sent from Bosphorus

Have long time hid within our palace
here—

Long time before I knew, or I had
nipt

The treason in the bud; and in an hour
Or less from when we speak, they will
go forth,

When all the citizens are wrapt in sleep
After the toilsome day, and seize the
gates,

And open to the army which lies hid
On board the ships without. They will
not shed

The blood of any, since the o'erwhelm-
ing force

Will make resistance vain. A never
liked

The plot, I swear to thee; but, all
being done,

And I a subject, dared not disavow
That which was done without me.

But I have forced

A promise that no blood be spilt.

Gycia.

Asander,

I have known it all, and have dis-
covered all [*ASANDER starts.*

Thy secret to the Senate! But I knew
not,

Save by the faith that is the twin with
love,

That thou didst follow only in this
plot,

And wert unwilling; and I do rejoice
Thy hands are free from blood. But

oh, my love,

Break from these hateful men! Thou
art now a King,

Thou canst command. Come, let us
fly together;

There yet is time! I tell thee that this
plot

Is doomed to ruin. Ere the morning
dawns,

All but the guilty leaders will be sent
Prisoners to Bosphorus, and thou with
them.

I have gained this on my knees; but
for the guilty

The State has punishments.

Asan.

Gycia, thou wouldst not

That I should break: my faith? 'Tis a
King's part

To keep faith, though he die. But
when they have seized

The city, then, using my kingly office,
I will undo the deed, and make alliance

With Cherson, and this done I will
depart,

Taking my Queen with me.

Gycia. Then must I go ;

I cannot live without thee.

Asan. Now to rest,

If not to sleep.

Gycia. Good night, my love ; fare-
well.

Asan. Nay, not farewell, my love !

Gycia. Ah yes, farewell !

Farewell ! farewell for ever ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—OUTSIDE THE BANQUET
HALL. DARKNESS.

*GYCIA hurriedly descends the steps,
closing the great doors of the banquet
hall softly.*

Gycia. I hear no sound within ; the
lights are gone,

And all the hall is dark. These doors
alone

Of all the many outlets of the palace
Remain unlocked. There is not now a
moment

To lose ere midnight comes, and here I
hold

The safety of our Cherson. Oh, my
love !

I could not tell thee all, nor recom-
pense

Thy faith in me, since duty held me
fast—

My duty which should also prove thy
safety,

For now the solemn promise of the
State

Is pledged to hold thee harmless, and
defeat

The shameful plot I knew was never
thine,

Without one drop of bloodshed. All
my path

Shows clear as noonday, and I save our
city

And those who with thee err in inno-
cence.

Why do I hesitate ? Yet does some dark
And dreadful presage of impending ill

So haunt me that I know not how to
face it.

I dare not do it. I must stay with
him,

Or bring him forth with me.

[*Ascends the steps, throws open the
doors, and finds all darkness and
silence.*]

Asander ! husband !

It is thy wife who calls ! Come forth,
Asander ! [*Listens.*]

Nay, there is no one there. I cannot
stay ;

This is mere folly. I must keep my
word ;

There's not a moment's time, or all is
lost.

Which is the key ?

[*Closes the doors and locks them with
a clang.*]

I must go forth alone

To the Senate-chamber. I have saved
our Cherson

And my *Asander !*

[*Totters down the steps and exit
hurriedly.*]

SCENE IV.—THE SENATE-CHAMBER.

ZETHO and Senators ; afterwards

GYCIA.

Zetho. What is the hour ?

Bardanes. It wants five minutes only
To midnight. Think you she will come ?

Zetho. I know her.
She is the soul of honour, and would
keep

Her word if 'twere her death.

Bard. But would she keep it
If 'twere her lover's?

Zetho. She thinks not that it is,
Nor should it be, indeed, were we but
true

As I believe her.

Bard. True! There is no truth
In keeping faith with murderers; they
must perish

In the same net which they laid
privily
Against a faithful city.

Enter GYCIA, tottering in, with the keys.

Zetho. Hail, noble daughter! Thou
hast saved the State.

I knew thou wouldst not fail us.

Gycia. See, good Zetho,
The proof that I have done my part to
you.

There are the master keys of all the
doors

Within the palace. When I closed the
last,

A few brief minutes since, there was no
sound

Nor light in hall or chamber; every
court

Was silent as the grave.

Bard. Ay, as the grave
It is, or will be soon.

Gycia. What mean you, sir,
I pray you? I am but a timid woman,
Full of foreboding fears and dread of
ill,

And such a doubt doth overspread my
soul,

Hearing thy words, I think I shall go
mad.

Nay, Zetho, he is safe; I have your
promise

Thou wouldst not harm him. An o'er-
whelming force,

Thou saidst, should so surround them
that resistance

Were vain, and ere the dawn they
should go hence

Without one drop of bloodshed.

Zetho. Ay, my daughter,
Such was the promise.

Bard. And it will be kept.
[*Bell strikes midnight.*]

Hark, 'tis the hour! An overwhelming
force

[*A red glare rising higher and higher
is seen through the windows of the
Senate-chamber. Confused noises
and shouts heard without.*]

Surrounds them, but no drop of blood
is shed.

All will go hence ere dawn.

Gycia. Oh, cruel man,
And most perfidious world! Oh, my
Asander!

To die thus and through me!

[*A violent knocking is heard at the
door.*]

*Enter THEODORUS in great agitation,
and IRENE, who throws herself on her
knees, weeping. GYCIA falls swooning
in ZETHO'S arms.*

Zetho. Whence com'st thou, Theo-
dorus?

Theo. Straight, my lord,
From Gycia's palace.

Zetho. Say, what didst thou there?
And what of horror has befallen thee
That makes thine eyes stare thus?

Theo. Most noble Zetho,
When from the banquet scarce an hour
ago

I passed, came one who offered me a letter
 And bade me read. 'Twas from this woman here,
 My sister, and it told of some great peril
 By fire, which she, within the prison locked,
 Expected with the night. Wherefore I sped
 With one I trusted, and did set a ladder
 Against her casement, calling her by name,
 And bidding her descend. But no voice came,
 And all was dark and silent as the grave;
 And when I called again, the Prince Asander,
 From an adjacent casement looking, cried,
 "I had forgot thy sister. Take her hence;
 She should go free!" And then, at her own casement
 [GYCIA revives and listens.
 Appearing, he came forth, and in his arms
 A woman's senseless form. As they descended
 And now were in mid-air, there came the sound
 Of the bell striking midnight, and forth-with
 In a moment, like a serpent winged with fire,
 There rose from wall to wall a sheet of flame,
 Which in one instant mounted to the roof
 With forked red tongues. Then every casement teemed

With strange armed men, who leapt into the flames
 And perished. Those who, maimed and burnt, escaped,
 Ere they could gain their feet, a little band
 Of citizens, who sprang from out the night,
 Slew as they lay. The Prince, who bore my sister
 Unhurt to ground, stood for a moment mute.
 Then, seeing all was lost, he with a groan
 Stabbed himself where we stood. I fear his hurt
 Is mortal, since in vain I tried to staunch
 The rushing blood; then bade them on a litter
 Carry him hither gently. Here he comes.

Enter Citizens, bearing ASANDER on a litter, wounded.

Gycia. Oh, my love, thou art hurt!
 Canst thou forgive me?
 I thought to save thee and the rest. I knew not,
 I did not know! Oh, God!
 Asan. I do believe thee.
 The fates have led our feet by luckless ways
 Which only lead to death. I loved but thee.
 I wished thy State no wrong, but I am dying.
 Farewell! my love, farewell! [*Dies.*
 Gycia. Oh, my lost love!
 [*Throws herself on the body and kisses it passionately.*
Zetho. Poor souls! Mysterious are the ways of Heaven,

And these have suffered deeply in the
fortune

That bound their lives together.

Bard. That dead man
Would have betrayed our State, and
thou dost pity !

So perish all the enemies of Cher-
son !

Gycia (rising). Nay, sir, be silent.
'Tis a coward's part
To vilify the dead. You, my Lord
Zetho,

I had your promise that you would hurt
none

Except the guilty only, and I thought
That to your word I might entrust my
life

And one more dear than mine ; but now
it seems

That in some coward and unreasoning
panic

This worthy Senator has moved his
colleagues—

Since cruelty is close akin to fear—
To break your faith to me, and to con-
fuse

The innocent and guilty, those who
led

And those who followed, in one dread-
ful death !

I pray you pardon me if, being a
woman,

Too rashly taking part in things of
State,

I have known nought of State-craft or
the wisdom

Which breaks a plighted word.

Zetho. Daughter, I would
Our promise had been kept, and I had
kept it

But that the safety of the State to
some

Seemed to demand its breach.

Gycia. Farewell, good Zetho,
And all who were my friends. I am
going hence ;

I can no longer stay. There lies my
love.

There flames my father's house. I go
far off,

A long, long journey. If you see me
not

In life again, I humbly pray the
State

May, if it think me worthy—for in-
deed

I have given it all—bury me, when I
die,

Within the city, in a fair white
tomb,

As did our Grecian forefathers of
old

For him who saved the State ; and, if
it may be,

Lay my love by my side.

Zetho and Sens. Daughter, we swear
That thou shalt have thy wish.

Gycia. I thank you, sirs.
Then, I may go. Kiss me, good
Theodorus :

I am no more a wife. I know thy
love,

And thank thee for it. For that wretch
whose lie

Has wrecked our life and love, I bless
the gods

That I am childless, lest my daughter
grew

As vile a thing as she ; and yet I know
not.

She loved him in some sort, poor wretch,
poor wretch !

But now I must be going. 'Tis past
midnight ;

[*Snatches a dagger from THEODO-
RUS'S side.*

I must go hence. I have lost my life
and love,

But I have saved the State.

*[Stabs herself and falls on ASANDER'S
body.]*

Citizens of Cherson bursting in.

Cits. The State is saved! Long
may our Cherson flourish!

The State is saved! Long live our
Lady Gycia,

Who saved the State!

Gycia (rising a little). Yes, I have
saved the State!

[Falls back dead.]

Citizens (without). Long live the
Lady Gycia!

Curtain.

SONGS OF BRITAIN.

ON A THRUSH SINGING IN AUTUMN.

SWEET singer of the Spring, when the
new world

Was filled with song and bloom, and
the fresh year

Tripped, like a lamb playful and void
of fear,

Through daisied grass and young leaves
scarce unfurled,

Where is thy liquid voice
That all day would rejoice?

Where now thy clear and homely call,
Which from gray dawn to evening's
chilling fall

Would echo from thin copse and
tasselled brake,

For homely duty tuned and love's dear
sake?

The spring-tide passed, high summer
soon should come.

The woods grew thick, the meads a
deeper hue;

The pipy summer growths swelled, lush
and tall;

The sharp scythes swept at daybreak
through the dew.

Thou didst not heed at all,

Thy prodigal voice grew dumb;

No more with song mightst thou be-
guile,

She sitting on her speckled eggs the
while,

Thy mate's long vigil as the slow days
went,

Solacing her with lays of measureless
content.

Nay, nay, thy voice was Duty's, nor
would dare

Sing were Love fled, though still the
world were fair;

The summer waxed and waned, the
nights grew cold,

The sheep were thick within the wattled
fold,

The woods began to moan,

Dumb wert thou and alone;

Yet now, when leaves are sere, thy
ancient note

Comes low and halting from thy doubt-
ful throat.

Oh, lonely loveless voice, what dost
thou here

In the deep silence of the fading year?

Thus do I read the answer of thy song :

"I sang when winds blew chilly all
day long ;

I sang because hope came and joy was
near,

I sang a little while, I made good cheer ;
In summer's cloudless day

My music died away ;

But now the hope and glory of the year
Are dead and gone, a little while I sing
Songs of regret for days no longer here,
And touched with presage of the far-
off Spring."

Is this the meaning of thy note, fair
bird?

Or do we read into thy simple brain
Echoes of thoughts which human hearts
have stirred,

High-soaring joy and melancholy pain?

Nay, nay, that lingering note

Belated from thy throat—

"Regret," is what it sings, "regret,
regret !

The dear days pass, but are not wholly
gone.

In praise of those I let my song go on ;
'Tis sweeter to remember than forget."

IN A COUNTRY CHURCH.

THE organ peals, the people stand,
The white procession through the aisles,
As is our modern use, defiles
In ranks, which part on either hand.

They chant the psalms with resonant
voice

These peasants of our Saxon Kent ;

With the old Hebrew king rejoice,
With him grow contrite and repent.

But when the pale priest, blandly cold
White-winged above the eagle bends,
I lose the ancient words of old,
The monotone which still ascends.

For there the village school is set,
A row of shining faces bright,
Round cheeks by time unwrinkled yet,
Smooth heads, and boyish collars white.

And through the row there runs a smile,
Like sunlight on a rippling sea—
A childish mirth, devoid of guile ;
What may the merry movement be?

The teachers frown ; not far to seek
The wonder seems, for it is this :
A little scholar whose round cheek
A stain of gules appears to kiss.

For some low shaft of wintry sun
Strikes where Dame Dorothy of the
Grange,

In long devotions never done,
Kneels on through centuries of change ;

And from her robe's unfading rose,
Athwart the fair heads ranged below,
A ruddy shaft at random goes,
And lights them with unwonted glow.

And straightway all the scene but
these

Grows dim for me ; I heed no more
The preacher's smooth monotonies,
The chants repeated o'er and o'er.

For I am borne on fancy's wings
Far from the Present to the Past ;

From those which pass to those which
last,

The root and mystery of Things.

How many an old and vanished day,
Has gone, she kneeling there the while,
And watching, with her saintly smile,
The generations fade away.

The children came each Sunday there
To hear the self-same chant and hymn ;
The boys grew strong, the girls grew
fair,

Their lives with fleeting years grew dim.

Their children's children came and
went,

She kneeling in the self-same prayer ;
They passed to withered age, and bent,
And left the Lady kneeling there.

They passed, and on the churchyard
ground

No more their humble names are seen ;
Only upon the billowy mound
Yearly the untrodden grass grows green.

They grew, they waned through toil
and strife,

From innocence to guilt and sin ;
They gained what prize was theirs to
win,

They sank in shame the load of life.

And still the kneeling Lady calm
Throws gules on many a childish head,
And still the self-same prayers are said,
The self-same chant, the self-same
psalm.

So had they been, before as yet,
Her far-off grandsires lived and died,
Ere long descent had nourished pride,
Before the first Plantagenet.

No change, unless some change there
were

In simpler rite or grayer stone,
The self-same worship never done,
And for its very age grown fair.

Great God, the creatures of Thy hand,
Must they thus fail for ever still
Thy high behests to understand,
To seek and find Thy hidden will ?

Are Thy hands slow to succour then ?
And are Thy eyes, then, slow to see
The toiling, tempted race of men
Born into sin and misery ?

For nineteen centuries of Time,
Nay more, for dim unnumbered years,
Men's eyes have sought Thy face
sublime,
And turned uncomforted, in tears.

For countless years unsullied youth
Has sunk through grosser mire of
sense ;
And yet men cherish innocence !
And yet we are no nearer truth !

And not the less from age to age
Heavenward the unchanging suffrage
rolls

From hearts inspired by holy rage,
And meek and uncomplaining souls,

Who see no cloud of doubt o'erspread
The far horizons of the sky,
But view with clear, unfailing eye
The mansions of the happy dead.

Oh, wonder ! oh, perplexèd thought !
Oh, interchange of good and ill !
In vain, by life's long pain untaught,
We strive to solve the riddle still.

In vain, so mixed the twofold skein,
That none the tangle may unwind ;
Where one the gate of Heaven may
 find,
Another shrinks in hopeless pain.

So here the immemorial sum
Of simple reverence may breed
A finer worship than might come
For fruit of some severer creed.

Kneel, Lady, blazoned in thy place !
Through generations children kneel.
To know is weaker than to feel :
Though Truth seem far, we know her
 face !

IN SPRING-TIDE.

THIS is the hour, the day,
The time, the season sweet.
Quick ! hasten, laggard feet,
Brook not delay ;
Love flies, youth passes, Maytide will
 not last ;
Forth, forth, while yet 'tis time, before
the Spring is past.

The Summer's glories shine
From all her garden ground,
With lilies plunkt around,
And roses fine ;
But the pink blooms or white upon the
 bursting trees,
Primrose and violet sweet, what charm
has June like these ?

This is the time of song.
From many a joyous throat,
Mute all the dull year long,
Soars love's clear note ;

Summer is dumb, and faint with dust
and heat ;
This is the mirthful time when every
sound is sweet.

Fair day of larger light,
Life's own appointed hour,
Young souls bud forth in white—
The world's a-flower ;
Thrill, youthful heart ; soar upward,
limpid voice ;
Blossoming time is come—rejoice,
joyce, rejoice !

IN AUTUMN.

"DECAY, decay," the wildering west
winds cry,
"Decay, decay," the moaning woods
reply ;
The whole dead autumn landscape,
drear and chill,
Strikes the same chord of desolate sad-
ness still.
The drifting clouds, the floods a sullen
sea,
The dead leaves whirling from the
ruined tree,
The rain which falling soaks the sodden
way,
Proclaim the parting summer's swift
decay.
No song of bird, nor joyous sight or thing,
Which smooths the wintry forefront of
the spring ;
No violet lurking in its mossy bed,
Nor drifted snow-bloom bending over-
head,
Nor kingcups carpeting the meads with
gold,
Nor tall spiked orchids purpling all the
wold ;

But thin dull herbage which no more
may grow,
And dry reeds rustling as the chill
winds blow,
Bleak hillsides whence the huddled
flocks are fled,
And every spear of crested grass lies
dead.
"Decay, decay," the leafless woodlands
sigh,
The torpid earth, and all the blinded
sky,
And down the blurred moor, 'mid the
dying day,
An age-worn figure limps its weary way.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S
DREAM.

FAR in the west sinks down the Sun
On bars of violet and gold,
A soft breeze springs up fresh and
cold,
And darkness a transparent pall
Upon the waiting earth begins to fall,
And, decked with lucent gems of orb'd
light,
Walks forth the sable Night,
And once again the unfailing miracle is
done.

Ineffable, illimitable, immense,
Wonder of wonders, mystery of Space,
How can a finite vision meet thy face?
How shall not our poor eyes, dazzled
and dim,
Which see but thy vast circle's outward
rim,
Sink touched before thy gaze with im-
potence?
How shall our feeble voices dare to
hymn

Thy infinite glories—voices which were
best
To mortal loves and earth's poor joys
address?
How seek our earthly limits to trans-
cend,
And, without halt or pause,
Soaring beyond the twilight of our laws,
Touch with a feeble hand on glories
without end?

Nay, great are these indeed
And infinite, but not so great as He
Their Maker who has formed them,
who made me,
Who can in fancy leap, outward and
outward still
Beyond our System and its farthest star,
Beyond the greater Systems ranged afar,
To which our faintest suns are satellites,
and no more—
Beyond, beyond, beyond, and strive to fill
The illimitable void which never sense
Nor thought alone may compass or
contain,
Then with a whirling brain
Return to the great Centre of all light,
Which doth control and bound the
Infinite,
And, looking to the undiscovered Sun,
Find all perplexity and longing done,
And am content to wonder and to adore.

This 'tis alone
Which doth console and soothe our
feeble thought,
Faint with the too great strain to com-
prehend
A Universe, which owns nor source nor
end.
Wherever through the boundless wastes
we stray,
For ever and for ever, some faint ray

Of the great central Sun, the hidden
Will,
Attends our wanderings still ;
Beyond the utmost limits of the sky,
Unseen, yet seen, the gaze of an Eternal
Eye.

No waste of systems lies around,
But a great Rule by which all things
are bound.

A changeless order circles sun with sun ;
One great Will pulses through, and
makes them one.

System on system, vast or small,
One great Intelligence directs them all.
No longer from the endless maze we
shrink,

Like those who on some sea-cliff's
dreadful brink

Long to fling down into the empty air
And lose the pain of living, and to be
Sunk in the deep abysses of the sea ;
To lose the pain of living and the care,
Which dogs life like its shadow.

Nay, no dread
Have we who know a great Sun over-
head,

Which shines upon us always, unbeheld.
How should our eyes behold what is
too great

For our imperfect state ?

How should our minds reach to it ;
how attain

With a too feeble brain,

To comprehend the Unbounded, the
Immense,

Incomprehensible by finite sense ?—

How through the Finite view the
Infinite,

Except by this clear Light ?

That is the light, indeed,
Which lights all souls which come upon
the earth.

That is the central Sun which on our
birth

Shone, and will shine upon us till the
end ;

A central Will which holds the worlds
in space ;

A Presence, though we look not on its
face,

Which sows a cosmic order through the
waste of things ;

A Being, all the beatings of whose wings
Are secular wastes of Time ; of whose
great soul

Creations are but moods, in whose vast
mind

Antinomies of Thought repose com-
bined,

Till those which seem to us as change-
less laws

Show but as phases of the Unchanging
Cause,

And we and all things fade and pass
away,

Lost in the effulgence of the Boundless
Day.

Let, then, unbounded Space,
Sown thick with worlds, encompass us ;
we care

No whit for it, nor shall our dazzled eyes
This waste of Worlds surprise,

Which have looked on its Maker, who
is more

Than all his work can be, but not the
less

Dwells in each human soul that looks
on Him

Albeit with vision dim ;

Whose constant Presence all our lives
confess,

Of whom we are a part, and closer far
Than is the furthest, most unmeasured
star,

Than are His great suns, big with
fruitful strife,
Seeing that we are a portion of His
Life,
Seeing that we hold His Essence—
some clear spark,
Which shines when all creation else
grows dark,
And are, however impotent and small,
One with the Will that made and
governs all.

* * * *

And now the night grows thin ;
A subtle air of newness seems to stir
Before the dawn, as if its harbinger
To prisoned souls within,
Proclaiming the near coming of the day.
Then Darkness, a great bird, with raven
wing,
Flies to the furthest west, and in her
stead
Young Day, an orient conqueror over-
head,
Looks down, and all that waste of
worlds has fled ;
And once again the Eternal, mystic
Birth
Is born upon the earth,
And once again the round of whole-
some life,
The doubt-dispelling stir and joyous
strife,
Chases the dreadful visions of the night,
Lost in the increasing light ;
And from the spheres a still voice seems
to say,
"Awake, arise, adore, behold the Day !
It is enough to be, nor question why ;
It is enough to work our work and die ;
It is enough to feel and not to know.
Behold, the Dawn is breaking ; let us
go."

AN ENGLISH IDYLL.

ONCE I remember, in a far-off June,
Leaving the studious cloister of my
youth,
Beside the young Thames' stream I laid
me down,
Wearied, upon a bank. 'Twas mid-
summer ;
The warm earth teemed with flowers ;
the kingcup's gold,
The perfumed clover, 'mid the crested
grass,
The plantains rearing high their flowery
crowns
Above the daisied coverts ; overhead,
The hawthorns, white and rosy, bent
with bloom,
The broad-spread chestnuts spiked
with frequent flowers,
And white gold-hearted lilies on the
stream ;
All these made joy within my heart,
and woke
The fair idyllic phantasies of Greece ;
And dreaming, well content with the
rich charm
Of summer England, long I idly mused :
"And were the deep-set vales of Thes-
saly
Or fair Olympian beech-groves more
than this ?
Or the Sicilian meads more rich in
flowers,
Where the lost goddess plucked the
asphodel ?
Or flowed the clear stream through a
lovelier shade
Where Dian bathed and rapt Actæon
saw ?
Or were they purer depths where Hyias
played

Till the nymphs drew him down? Ah,
 fairer dreams
 Than our poor England holds! Grave,
 toil-worn land!
 Poor aged mother of a graceless brood,
 With shambling gait and limbs by
 labour bent!
 What should she know of such?"

When straight I heard
 A ripple of boyish mirth, and looking
 saw
 Far off along the meads a gliding boat
 Float noiselessly; lithe forms at either
 end—
 The self-same forms which Phidias fixed
 of old—
 With tall poles, pressed it forward,
 others lay
 Reclined, and all had crowned their
 short smooth hair
 With lilies from the stream, while one
 had shaped
 Some hollow reed in semblance of a
 pipe,
 Making a shrill faint sound—a joyous
 crew,
 Clothed with the grace of innocent
 nakedness.
 Then, while they yet were far, ere yet
 a sound
 Of their poor rustic tones assailed the
 sense,
 Or too great nearness marred the grace
 of form——

Poised sudden in a white row, side by
 side,
 They plunged down headlong in the
 sweet warm tide.
 Then, as I went, within myself I
 said,
 "The young Apollo is not wholly
 fled,

Nor can long centuries of toil and care
 Make youth less comely or the earth
 less fair.
 To the world's ending Joy and Grace
 shall be.
 I, too, have been to-day in Arcady."

ANIMA MUNDI.

OH great World-Spirit, wherefore art
 thou come?
 We crave an answer, but thy voice is
 dumb.

Oh great World-Spirit, whither dost
 thou tend?
 By what dark paths to what mysterious
 end?

We do not know, we cannot tell at
 all,
 Only before thy onward march we
 fall.

* * * *

Nay, but before thy throne we fall, we
 kneel;
 We crave not that thy face thou shouldst
 reveal;
 We do not seek to know, only to feel.

We praise thee not in words our tongues
 can tell;
 Though thy hand slay us, we will not
 rebel.

Whate'er thy will design for us, 'tis well.

Compute our lives with all thy bound-
 less past,
 Project them on thy abysmal Future
 vast;
 Only let all be merged in Thee at last.

IN PEMBROKESHIRE, 1886.

THROUGH crested grass I took my way
From my loved home. The sun was
high ;
The warm air slept the live-long day ;
No shadowy cloudlet veiled the sky.

The swift train swept with rhythmic
tune,
By endless pastures hurrying down,
White farm, lone chapel, castled town,
Then, fringed with weed, the salt lagune.

And last the land-locked haven blue,
Thin-sown with monstrous works of
war,
And on the sweet salt air I knew
Faint sounds of cheering from afar.

* * * * *
Strong arms and backs are bent, and
then
They draw us up the fluttering street ;
Behind, there comes the ordered beat
Of long-drawn files of marching men.

At last a halt ; a steep hillside
Set thick with toil-worn workers strong,
Grave faces stretching far and wide,
Fired with the hope to banish wrong.

Ah me ! how thin one voice appears,
To reach so many eager minds !
Nay, for it speaks to willing ears,
And what the hearer seeks he finds.

Unhappy Island of the West !
Thy brethren these in race and blood,
Not like thee tempted or opprest,
But filled with longing for thy good.

For just is manhood rude and strong
And generous the toiler's soul ;

When these the ship of State control,
Oppression shall not flourish long.

* * * *

The crowds are gone, the hillside bare,
The last good-nights at length are said,
The harbour crossed again, the fair
Large star of eve hangs overhead.

The shades of tardy evening fall ;
Lights come in casements here and
there ;

Through dewy meads on the cool air
The wandering landrails hoarsely call.

The silent roads loom ghostly white ;
No veil of darkness hides the skies ;
A sunless dawn appears to rise
Upon the stilly charmed night.

The day's hot concourse comes to seem
Far, far away ; the eager crowd,
The upturned gaze, the plaudits loud,
In the cool silence like a dream.

And oh, sweet odours, which the air
Of the calm summer midnight deep
Draws from the rose which lies asleep,
And bowery honeysuckles fair.

Oh, perfumed night ! Some tremulous
bird
From the thick hedgerows seems to
thrill.

No other sound but this is heard,
Save ringing horsehoofs, beating still.

Midnight is past ; there comes a gleam,
Precursor of the scarce-set sun.
Through gray streets hushed as in a
dream

We sweep, and the long day is done.

* * * *

Men pass, but still shall Nature keep
Her night's cool calm, her dawn's
bright glow ;

Unseen her fragrant wild flowers creep,
Unmarked her midnight odours blow.

The long injustices of years
Shall pass ; the hapless Western Isle
Shall dry the age-long trace of tears,
And show instead a happy smile.

The wheels of Fate are swiftly borne
From point to point, from change to
change ;

What yesterday was new and strange ;
To-morrow scouts as old and worn.

I may forget the shouting crowd,
The sea of eyes which upward turn,
The kindling cheeks, the plaudits loud,
The sympathies which glow and burn.

Ay, all things change, but hardly those
Shall fade—the midnight calm of June,
The cool sweet airs, the night-bird's
tune,

The perfume of the sleeping rose.

EASTER-TIDE.

AWAKE, arise, oh Earth !
Thy hour has come at last ;
The winter's ruin past,
Spring comes to birth.

The virgin world with flowers again
grows bright,

And in the increasing light

Doth clothe herself with beauty ; once
again

A new creation issues with a stately
train.

Oh soul of man, arise
And keep thy Easter-tide,
White clothed as is a bride,
With calm pure eyes ;

When all things living else rejoice,
Not thine should be the voice
Alone to keep dull silence, mute, un-
heard,
Amid the joy that wakens every nest-
ing bird.

'Tis an old Spring of mirth
That bids our souls arise ;
No other moved the priests and
augurs wise

Upon the younger earth
When for the Passover the lamb was
slain,
Nor when they did complain
Of old time for the fair Adonis dead,
Greeting with tears of joy that dear
recovered head.

The same, yet not the same,
Joy fuller, deeper grief
Than in the old ages came
To wake belief.

The Spring our voices celebrate to-day
Is not the Spring which fades with
May,
Nor that renewal ours which shall be
done
Soon as our earth leans outward from
the averted sun.

Nor as theirs is our loss
Who wept the enamoured boy ;
Ours is a heavier cross,
A livelier joy,

Mixed in such sort with grief that one
is bred
From the other and by it nourished,

So that without the salutary pain
Were no place left for this triumphant
gain.

Great Law of Sacrifice
On which our lives are built,
That with our load of guilt
Soars to the skies,

I doubt if ever there was race of man
But based its life on such a mystic plan,
From old Prometheus' godlike treachery
To calm Osiris cold and sad Persephone.

Therefore, because the end
Of Winter comes and Death,
Our yearning souls ascend,
Faith quickeneth.

How should it be that man alone could
cease

When all things else increase?

Man, the first fruit of Time, Creation's
crown—

Shall he, while all is Spring, lie hope-
less and cast down?

Ay, always with the Spring
The waking comes again;
Mixed tones of joy and pain
Our life-chords sing.

Sweet are the songs of autumn, sweet
of death,

And bitter sweet the first-drawn breath,
And sweet, though full of pain, the
mortal strife

When from Death's grasp we struggle
into Life.

That is the law of life—
Joy bought by sacrifice,
Pleasure for hopeless sighs,
And rest for strife.

The earth is no more, as it was at first,
By some strange spell accurst;

A mystery has passed a mystery,
A boundless hope has bid new heavens
and earth to be.

Rise, happy Earth, arise,
Thy wintry darkness done,
To greet the new-risen sun
Oh soul, arise!

The joy which stirs the world let it
wake thee.

A symbol of thy risen life is born.

Awake, arise! this is the very morn;
A mystery has been! a mystery!

GHOSTS.

SOMETIMES in some forsaken place,
Hid from the aspect of the sun,
We come on some forgotten trace
Of life and years long dead and done.

Some faded picture's doubtful truth,
Fixed in the springtime of our days,
Which through all change of mien
portrays
The evanescent charm of youth—

The rounded cheek, the wealth of hair,
The bright young eye's unclouded
blue.

White head, wan face, were you thus fair?
Sad eyes, and were these ever you?

Changed, and yet still unchanged
through change,
The self-same lives for good or ill,
Thin ghosts with features known, yet
strange,
Of us who live and travail still.

Thin ghosts! or is it we who fade
And are deceased, and keep no more

Than some thin unsubstantial shade
Of the young hopes and fears of yore?

Who knows what Life, or Death, or
Time

Are in themselves, or whither tend
The great world's footsteps slow,
sublime,

From what dim source—to what
hidden end?

Or if our growth be but decay,
Or if all Life must wax and grow,
Or if no change true Being know,
Though all things outward pass
away?

Ah! not in outward things we know
The chiefest work of Time and
Change;

But new faiths come, old thoughts
grown strange,
Old longings which no more may
glow.

Some time-stained sheaf of youthful
verse,

Some inarticulate yearning dumb,
Once dear, ere time and age had come
To turn the better to the worse.

In these the gazer starts to see
A self, not his, reflected most,
And asking, "Were these part of
me?"

Knows he has looked upon a ghost.

SONG.

LOVE took my life and thrilled it
Through all its strings,
Played round my mind and filled it
With sound of wings,
But to my heart he never came
To touch it with his golden flame.

Therefore it is that singing
I do rejoice,
Nor heed the slow years bringing
A harsher voice,
Because the songs which he has sung
Still leave the untouched singer young.

But whom in fuller fashion
The Master sways,
For him, swift winged with passion,
Fleet the brief days.
Betimes the enforced accents come,
And leave him ever after dumb.

FROM WILD WALES.

I.

LLYN Y MORWYNION.

By fair Festiniog, 'mid the Northern
Hills,

The vales are full of beauty, and the
heights,

Thin-set with mountain sheep, show
statelier far

Than in the tamer South. There the
stern round

Of labour rules,—a silent land, some-
times

Loud with the blast that buffets all the
hills

Whereon the workers toil, in quarries
hewn

Upon the terraced rocksides. Tier on
tier,

Above the giddy depths, they edge and
cling
Like flies to the sheer precipice as they
strike
The thin cleft slate. For solace of
their toil
Song comes to strengthen them, and
songlike verse
In the old Cymric measures, and the
dream
Of fame when all the listening thousands
round
Are ranged in Session, and the rapt
array
Expectant of the singer's soaring voice,
Or full quire rising thund'rous to the
skies,
The sheathed swords, and the sacred
Chair of oak,
Where sits the Bard. But most of all
they prize
Old memories of the Past, forgotten
feuds,
And battles long ago. One tale they
tell
Of a deep tarn upon the mountain side,
Llyn y Morwynion called, — "The
Maidens' Lake ;"
And thus it is the fair old story runs.

On Arvon once the men of Meirion,
Being alone, nor having hearth or home,
Swooped down when all her warriors
were afield
Against the foemen. And they snatched
from them
The flower of all the maidens of the
race,
And to their mountain fastness far away
Bare them unchecked. There with
great care and love

They tended them, and in the captives'
hearts
The new observance slowly ousted all
The love of home and country, till they
stayed
Content, forgetting all their lives before,
Parents and kinsfolk, everything but
love.

But when the war was ended, and
their arms
Set free, the men of Arvon sent demand
That they should straight restore to
home and kin
The maidens they had rapt. Then
came great doubt
Upon the men of Meirion, knowing well
Their strength too weak to match the
Arvonian hosts
In unassisted war ; heralds they sent
To Arvon asking peace, making amends
For what had been their fault. But the
others nursed
Deep anger in their hearts, and to their
words
Made only answer, " Give ye back un-
touched
Our daughters and our sisters, whom
your fraud
Has stolen from us, or prepare to
die."
Then they, taking deep counsel with
themselves,
Swore not for life itself would they
return
The women, only if themselves should
will
To leave them ; and they made request
of them
That they might know their wish. But
when they sought
To question them, they answered with
one voice—

"We will not go ; for barren is the
 lot
 Of maidenhood, and cold the weary fate
 Of loveless lives, the household tasks
 whose weight
 Bears down the childless woman. Since
 we came
 We have known life in the full light of
 home.
 Say to our sires and brothers, that we
 stay
 Willing, and bid our young men that
 they wive
 From out some noble tribe ; for thus
 it is
 Our Cymric race grows strong. But do
 ye bid
 Our mothers comfort them, for they
 shall take
 Their grandsons on their knees ; for we
 are wed
 And cannot more return. Not Fate
 itself
 Can e'er recall the irrevocable Past."

But when the men of Arvon heard
 the hest
 The herald brought, their souls were
 wroth in them
 Against the ravishers, whose cunning
 wiles
 Had worked such wrong. They called
 their warriors forth
 From every hill and dale, and marched
 in haste
 To Meirion. And they summoned
 them to yield,
 But they refused ; and so the fight was
 set
 For the morrow, on the margin of a
 mere
 Deep down within the circuit of the
 hills.

There, with the sun, within a close-
 set pass
 The men of Meirion stood, a scanty
 band,
 Waiting the approaching host. With
 grief and pain
 They left their loves, and swift, with
 breaking day,
 Marched with unfaltering steps, with-
 out a word,
 To the field of honour, as men go who
 know
 That all beside is lost. But as they
 stood,
 Ranged in stern silence, waiting for the
 fray,
 They saw a white procession thread the
 pass
 Behind, now seen, now lost, by flowery
 bends,
 Gorse gold and heather purple. At
 their head
 Blodeuwedd, she the flower in face and
 form
 By magic formed, by magic art fore-
 doomed
 To sin and suffer. Then again they
 knew
 The bitterness of death, and clasped
 once more
 The forms they loved, when by the lake
 the sun
 Lit the fierce light of countless marching
 spears.

Then with a last embrace the tearful
 throng
 Withdrew to where above the fastness
 rose
 A purple slope. No way the assailing
 host
 Might find to it while yet one stalwart
 arm

Of Meirion lived. Toward the lake it
fell,

Till in a sheer, precipitous cliff it sank,
Its base in the unfathomable deep.

Now, while the maidens like a fleece
of cloud

Whitened the hill, or like a timid flock
From nearer danger shrinking, swift
there came

Along the grassy margin of the lake
The countless spears of Arvon. And
their sires

And brethren saw them, and great wrath
and joy

Fired them and urged them onward, till
they surged

And broke on Meirion. But her strong
sons stood

And flung them backward; and the
frightened throng

Of white-robed suppliants saw the deed,
and feared,

Hiding their eyes, hovering 'twixt hope
and fear,

Divided 'twixt their lovers and their
kin.

All day the battle raged, from morn
to eve;

All day the men of Arvon charged and
broke,

And charged again the little band which
stood

Unshaken in the pass, but hourly grew
Weaker and weaker still. But at the
last

The noise of battle ceased awhile; the
shouts,

The cries, grew silent. On the purple
hill

The kneeling women saw the Arvonian
host

Retreating with their dead, and rose to
go

With succour to their lovers. As they
gazed,

Sudden, as with a last despairing
strength

And a hoarse shout, again, a torrent of
steel,

The men of Arvon, by their own weight
pressed,

Burst on the scant defenders of the
pass;

Like some fierce surge which from the
storm-vest sea;

Through narrow inlets fenced by rocky
walls,

Lifts high its furious crest, and sweeps
in ruin

Within the rayless, haunted ocean caves,
Rocks, wreckage, and the corpses of
the dead.

And as the women, impotent to save,
With agonizing hands and streaming
eyes

Looked down upon the pass, they saw
their loves

Driven back, o'erwhelmed, surrounded,
flashing swords

And thrusting spears and broken shields,
and heard

The noise of desperate battle, then a
pause

And silence, as the last of Meirion's sons
Sank in his blood and the long fight
was done.

Then suddenly, ere yet the conquer-
ing host

Might climb to them, Blodeuwedd,
standing clothed

In her unearthly beauty, faced the
throng

Of shrinking women. Not a word she
spake.

The sinking sun upon her snowy
robe

Shone with unearthly gold ; like some
fair bird

Leading the flock she showed. With
one white arm

She pointed to the dreadful pass where
lay

The thick-piled corpses, with the other
signed

Toward the sheer cliff, and to the lake
beneath

Motioned. One word she uttered —
“Follow me,”

And all who heard it knew and shared
her mind.

Then looking to the heavens, she
hurried down

Through thyme and heather, chanting
some wild hymn

To the Immortal Gods ; and with her
went

The white-robed throng, and when they
gained the verge,

Without a pause, plunged through the
empty air

Into the unfathomed depths, like some
great flight

Of white birds swooping from a sea-
cliff down

To ocean. The still waters leapt in
foam ;

One loud shriek only woke the air, and
then

Silence was over all, and night and
death.

Still sometimes, when the dreaming
peasants go

By the lone mountain tarn at shut of
day,

The white clouds with the eve descend-
ing swift

Down the steep hillside to the lake may
seem

The white-robed maidens falling, and
the shriek

Of night birds, fair Blodeuwedd and
her train ;

And fancy, by the ancient fable fed,
Turns from the duller Present's dust
and glare

To the enchanted twilights of the Past.

II.

THE PHYSICIANS OF MYDDFAI.

FAR, far away in wild Wales, by the shore of the boundless Atlantic,
Where the cloud-capt peaks of the North are dwarfed to the hills of the South,
And through the long vale to the sea, the full-fed, devious Towy
Turns and returns on itself, like the coils of a silvery snake,
A grey town sits up aloft on the bank of the clear, flowing river,
As it has sat since the days when the Roman was first in the land.
A town, with a high ruined castle and walls mantled over with ivy,
With church towers square and strong and narrow irregular streets,
And, frequent in street and lane, many-windowed high-shouldered chapels,

Whence all the still Sabbath ascend loud preaching and passionate prayer,
Such violent wrestling with sin, that the dogs on the pavement deserted
Wake with a growl from their dreams at the sound of the querulous voice,
And the gay youths, released from the counter and bound for the seaside or
hillside,

Start as they wake on their way echoes of undevout feet,
And here and there a rude square, with statues of popular heroes,
A long quay with scarcely a ship, and a hoary bridge spanning the stream,
The stream which struggles in June by the shallows where children are swimming,
The furious flood which at Yule roars seaward, resistless along,
Though the white steam ribbons float by it, forlorn it seems, almost forsaken.
All the day long in the week the dumb streets are hushed in repose,
But on market or fair days there comes a throng of Welsh-speaking peasants
From many a lonely farm in the folds of the rain-beaten hills,
And the long streets are filled with the high-pitched speech of the chaffering
Cymry,

With a steeple-crowned hat, here and there, and the red cloaks which daunted
the French.

Scarce in Keltic Brittany's self, or in homely Teutonic Silesia,
So foreign a crowd may you see as in this far corner of Wales.

Above the grey old town, at the mouth of the exquisite valley,
Rises a quaint village church deep in o'ershadowing yews ;
On a round-topped hill it stands, looking down on the silvery river
And the smooth meadows fenced by tall elms, and the black kine, like flies on
the green.

Below, 'midst its smooth-pleached lawns, stands the many-roofed Anglican
palace,

And aloft from its straight-ridged pines, the enchanter's summit ascends.
Thence along the upward vale, by fold upon fold of the river,
By park and by tower, at last the far-off mountain chains soar,
Flecked with shadow and sunshine which float on the side of the desolate
moorland,

And the whole still landscape lies bathed in a haze of ineffable peace.

There, where the mountains ascend by the white little town of Llandoverry,
Steeplly the circular side of the crater-like summit dips down.
A blue lake lies beneath, deep set in the desolate hollow,
Where scarcely a breath of air ruffles in summer its face.
The Van Lake 'tis called of old time, like the Van Lake of distant Armenia.
Hardly a wayfarer's foot comes near, or a wayfarer's eye.
But far, far below are seen the white homesteads, dotting the valley,
And to-day, as of old, still silence and solitude everywhere reign.

There, as in crowded towns, life is real and full of striving ;
There, too, is life fulfilled of small hopes and of trivial fears.
There, too, the finger of fate, unavoidable, pitiless, awful,
Points with unfaltering aim, to the road which our footsteps shall tread.
Love is among them, and hate, low desires and high aspirations,
Fortune is blind there as here, the good mourn, and the wicked rejoice.
Only there the sense of the Past, the romantic, the mystical lingers,
Touched with a glamour and charm, denied to the turmoil of towns.
The light which never has been, still shines on those hillsides secluded,
Illuming with rays, not of earth, those homely and labouring lives.
Here is a tale which is cherished to-day through that far-withdrawn valley,
Half believed by the aged folk still, but year by year fading away.

Long, long ago, when our Princes were falling in fight with the Norman,
And all our wild Wales lay o'erwhelmed by a torrent of rapine and blood,
A brave peasant woman strove here with hard fate, though her husband had
fallen,

Strove for her only boy, who was rising to manhood apace.
So close was the bond which bound widowed mother and dutiful stripling,
None of Myddfai's daughters touched the young man's self-contained heart.
A kindly fortune smiled on the toil of the desolate woman,
Their flocks and their herds increased on the meads of the bountiful vale,
So quickly their numbers grew, that from the shorn valley he drove them
To fresh fields and pastures new on the side of the mystical hills.

Morning and evening he watched on the lonely side of the hollow,
While the grey kine wandered at will on the hill's half-precipitous steep.
Oft on the lake's still surface, no breath came to ruffle the mirror,
Nor sound, save the boulders rolled downward, that stirred for a moment its
calm.

All the day long he mused, wrapt in thought on the desolate hillside,
All day the sure-footed kine cropt the sweet grass of the hills.
Thoughts came to him, innocent thoughts of a chaste youth guileless of error,
Thoughts of a maiden as fair as a young man's passionate dream.

Fair were the maidens of Myddfai, but fairer his far-off ideal,
Which touched with a glamour of gold the day-dreams of innocent youth.
All the day long he dreamt on, gazing down on the blue of the waters,
Till the splash of the trout, as they rose, seemed the oar of some mystical bark ;
All the day long he mused, and with evening, by moonlight or starlight,
Dreaming he wound his slow way with his kine to the valley below,
Dreaming through fair summer days and the long dark evenings of winter
The sweet shy dreams of a youth fulfilled of a virginal shame.

In secret his mother noted the dreams which her son was dreaming,
Marking the far-off look in the absent eyes of the boy.
Fain would she rouse him with jests and bantering words, but the stripling
Smiled a soft smile in reply, then turned to his musings again.

When he had spent many days in happy and undisturbed dreaming,
One day, as the setting sun threw beams of bright gold on the lake,
Lo ! a great marvel and wonder, a herd of phantom-like oxen
Seemed to his dazzled eyes to emerge from the mystical depths.
White they were, brindled and white, heavy dewlapped, lords of the meadows,
Driven as it seemed by a swan from the lake's far centre along.
Nearer and nearer they drew, till the swan to his yearning vision
Grew to a maiden as fair as the fanciful Fair of his dreams.
Gold were her locks and blue her eyes as the clear sky of autumn,
White was her bosom and red the half-opened rose of her mouth.
Nearer and nearer she came, till the youth, with ineffable longing,
Stretched forth his passionate arms to fold to his bosom the Fair,
Stretched forth, and offered her bread in humble token of friendship ;
But the Fair smiled a sweet smile, smiled and eluded his grasp.
Then, as he stood on the brink, in mute and motionless yearning,
Lo ! with a silvery laugh, the fair vision faded away.

Oftentimes thus on the brink he stood afterwards waiting the maiden,
Often she came not at all, or a strong wind ruffled the deep.
Twice again did she come, and he held forth bread for her taking,
Still, with a silvery laugh, refusing, she faded away.

Careworn the young man grew, and spent with unsatisfied yearnings,
Nor recked though the kine unheeded strayed on the perilous steeps.
Never again the lake maiden came by sunlight or moonlight,
Till his fond hope too long deferred, wasted him body and soul.
All his sleepless nights were filled with the pitiless vision ;
All the musing days, a slow fire burned in his breast ;
Half-ashamed, he told his mother his pain, and the pitying woman
Sighed that her son should thus pine, but knew not to succour his grief.
Marking his cheeks' red flush, she feared lest her son might be taken,
Till she found no heart for her toil, and her substance wasted away.

There, when Midsummer Eve was come, the magical season,
The young man wandered in vain on the brink of the mystical lake ;
There, when All-Hallow-tide came, he wandered, if only the maiden
Might rise on his longing eyes ; but never at all did she come.
At last, on the year's last night, he, stealthily rising at midnight,

To the cold lake side went, hopeless, with faltering feet.
The full moon bathed in silver steep hillside and slumbering waters.
By the cold lake side he paused, with something of half-renewed hope,
When, borne on the face of the waters, behold by the reeds of the lake side
Floating a magical disc of milk-white mystical bread.
Swift, yet with reverence too, as one taking the Host at the altar,
Kneeling, the youth partook of the strange ineffable food,
Till ere the weird rite was ended, again a marvellous portent
Greeted his longing eyes, and stayed the quick throb of his heart,
For lo ! on the silvery path of the moon on the undisturbed waters,
The herd that he saw once before came slowly gliding to land,
And beyond them—oh, vision of bliss !—the maid of his dreams, approaching,
Plying a light golden oar, in a swift-moving shallop of gold.
Nearer she came and more near, while his heart stood still with emotion,
Fearing the glorious dream should once again vanish away ;
Nearer and nearer she came, and leaped from the skiff to the lake side,
And lay, in unearthly beauty, willingly clasped in his arms.

When he found tongue to speak, " Oh, my love, at last have I found thee !
Though not of earth is thy race, oh, stoop to my virginal love.
Oh, it is long I have loved thee, and though I know thee immortal,
Tarry awhile, fair vision, leave me not loveless again !
Come from thy mountain heights, come from thy dwelling deep down in the waters.
Pity me ere I die who can only live in thy love."
Then the maid, " Rhiwallon, I love thee ; long time have I tried thy devotion,
Long have I pitied thy vigils spent in these desolate hills ;
Always have I been near thee, unseen have I witnessed thy yearnings,
Only the mystical bread was wanting to join us in one.
Now we are one heart and soul, I will live with thee always, and love thee."
And together the mystical bread they ate, and their lives were made one.

Then said the maiden, " Oh, mortal ! this warning I needs must give thee.
Thy wife will I be all thy days—thy dear wife, faithful and true,
Nourish thy children, obey thee in all things, be dutiful always,
Fill all thy fields with the dowry thou seest of full-uddered kine,
Love thee and cherish thee always, and plenish thy barn with good harvests,
Long as the will of high Heaven gives thee to live upon earth.
Only, this ordinance holds if a maid of the race of immortals
Wed with a mortal on earth, leaving her higher estate,
If he should strike her three times, she and hers, her bonds being loosened,
Whether she will it or not, return to her kindred again."
Careless the fond youth heard, and smothered her warning with kisses,
And down through the joyous New Year he went with his bride to their home.

Long in great welfare they lived, knit together in happy wedlock ;
Never a cloud arose on the tranquil sky of their home,
The great herds throve and increased more than all the herds of the valley,
The robbers who harried the vale left them untouched and in peace.
Never was husband more fond of the wife of his boyish affection,
Never was wife more sweet, or fuller of dutiful love.
The good mother died full of years, and calling her daughter blessed.
Children were born of their love, more than others prudent and fair.
Their strong sons were good and discreet, laborious, eager for knowledge,
Scarcely the Abbot himself equalled their learning, 'twas said ;
Fair were the daughters and good, sweet, dutiful maidens, and prudent ;
Nowhere in all our wild Wales was a race so gracious and fair.

And yet, when their wedlock was new, that had happened which now was
forgotten.
The youth and his bride were bidden one day to a christening feast.
The young husband hastened to go ; but the wife, with half-hid reluctance,
Loitered till almost too late to traverse the difficult hills.
Many a pretext she urged, not loving the rites of religion,
Holding some primitive faith, old as the hills and the seas,
Till, when the hour was grown late, Rhiwallon in playful impatience,
Seeking his wife up and down, found her reluctant at last.
“ Come,” said he, “ wife, it is time,” and smilingly on her fair shoulder
Tapped with his empty glove, and she rose and obeyed with a sigh.
“ Dearest, remember,” she said, “ my warning when first we were wedded ;
Once that has been which should not. Remember, be careful, my heart ! ”
Then to the christening she went, nor shrank from the priest nor the water,
Only a vague disquietude long time troubled their souls.

Also long years after this, when the past was wellnigh forgotten,
They were bidden together again to a gay marriage feast in the vale ;
Not now was the wife unwilling, but ready to go and eager.
In deep contentment the pair went forth to the innocent feast.
Duly the marriage sped, the priest said his mystical office,
No word the goodwife spake, as she knelt in her place by her lord ;
But when the marriage was done, and they sate at the jovial bride-feast,
Sudden the goodman perceived his wife in a passion of tears ;
Sobbing, she sate by his side inconsolable loudly lamenting,
Till all the gay company rose with dismay from the midst of their mirth.
Always her prescient soul saw the future hidden from mortals,
The grief that should come of that day, the dreadful problems of life,
The lives that from that day's mirth should arise—to what fate predestined ?
The long generations of men foredoomed to sorrow alone.

Knowing the fever of life and its ending, the mystical woman
 Held not her peace, but burst forth in a passion of weeping and pain ;
 But Rhiwallon, knowing not all, but filled with distress for the bridefolk,
 Turned to her, and bidding her cease, touched lightly her arm in reproof.
 In one moment she ceased from her wailing, and scarcely regarding her goodman,
 "Love," she said, "that was the second time ; only one other remains."

All these things had they almost forgot, living happy in wedlock,
 Watching their children grow to strong manhood and womanhood fair ;
 Smoothly their lives flowed along in unbroken weal and affection,
 As their devious Towy, which wound through cornland and mead to the sea.
 Not a thought had the goodman of death, or of parting, than death more bitter ;
 But the goodwife, loving her lord, watched with solicitous thought.
 Scarce from her prescient mind had faded the danger which pressed them,
 The bliss which a careless touch might turn in a moment to pain ;
 Here on the kindly earth she had made her choice and her dwelling,
 Here she would willingly live with her husband, and with him would die.
 Far off her birthland appeared, cold and lifeless the mystical waters ;
 Better to sleep in the meads than to pass that cold portal again.
 Love's light beaming warm on her life, in her veins the warm human life-blood
 Filled with new longings a heart which was only half human before.
 "What would life profit her now to those ice-cold abysses returning ?
 Better to die upon earth by the fate which awaiteth us all."
 Thus the goodwife, half human in heart, mused in silence, her children around
 her,
 Filled with a deep boding sense of the terrible nearness of fate.

Last it befell once again that the pair were bidden together
 (Christening for youth, for full age bride-feasts, for old age the grave),
 To a solemn burial they went ; 'twas a friend of their youth who was taken.
 All the desolate house was hushed in mourning and tears,
 But before the dead was borne forth, the strange heart of the mystical woman,
 Long keeping silence with pain, broke out at last into mirth.
 Was it because she knew that the burden of living is heavy,
 From what load of misery here the dead are delivered by death ?
 Or was it because she knew of her old primæval religion
 How much higher than human life is the lot of the just who are dead ?
 Or was it her soul had beheld the restitution of all things,
 And felt a great hope and joy which lightened the shadow of death ?
 Who shall tell ? but her elfin nature broke forth in immoderate laughter,
 Piercing the mourners' hearts, as they stood round the bier of the dead.
 Long time the goodman was mute, till at last keen shame overcame him,
 No more could he suffer unmoved that meaningless laughter and joy.

"Hush, hush ! wife," he said, "you forget," and touched her again on the shoulder.
 "For the ending of troubles I laughed," she replied, and grew grave and was still.

Then with a sob and a sigh the goodwife, looking behind her,
 Rose from her place by her lord and swiftly passed forth by the door.
 "Farewell," she said, "oh my love ; thou hast struck me the third and the last
 time.

Fate 'tis that parteth us—Fate ! Farewell ! I shall see thee no more."
 So strange she showed and so weird that the goodman dared not detain her.
 Seeing his goodwife no more, and knowing the finger of Fate ;
 Seeing his goodwife no more, no longer the well-beloved features,
 The hair that was silvered by time, the dim eyes with their motherly care ;
 But the radiant figure once more, golden-haired, azure-cyed, and immortal,
 That at midnight arose, long ago, from the depths of the mystical lake.
 None offered to stay her course, but she glided alone, unattended,
 Splendid in radiant youth, up the lonely, precipitous hills.
 Not to her home or her children returned, nor tarried a moment ;
 Straight to the hillside she went, weeping and blinded with tears,
 And as she passed by the fields where her magical cattle were grazing,
 Always she carolled aloud a strange and mystical song.

"Come hither, Brindle !" she sang ; "come, White Spot ! bring your calves
 with you !

Come thou, White Lord of the Herd, who wert born in the House of the King !
 Come, we must go to our home ! and ye, yoked patient-eyed oxen,
 Come with me, come with the rest ; it is time, come all of ye home !"

The great herds heard the call, and streamed in an endless procession ;
 The gray oxen burst from the furrow, leaving the ploughshare behind.
 Up the rough hillside they climbed behind her, obeying her mandate,
 Till they showed to the gazers below like a white cloud mounting the steep.
 Up the steep hillside they sped to the lake, and the wondering peasants
 Heard a clear voice from the hill, "Deuwch adre ! Deuwch adre ! Come home !"

Never again upon earth had Rhiwallon sight of his helpmeet,
 Never again did he seek his love on the lake and the hills ;
 Wayworn and weary he grew, nor might dreams of beauty allure him.
 The face that he loved and lost was aged, with silvery hair ;
 But the beautiful being who went from her seat at the fateful banquet—
 What was her youth to his age, or his age to her radiant youth ?
 What if his eyes once again should perceive the bright vision of old time,
 Old as he was, and changed from the hopeful dreams of the boy ?
 Nay, it would kill him to see the black deep which had taken his life's love.
 Never again did he gaze on its hateful magical face.

But the strong sons, when they knew their mother was gone from among them—
Gone without even a word, to strange death or to mystical life—
Evening by evening would climb the lonely, precipitous hillside,
Yearning if haply their eyes might see the loved features again.
Long, long vigils they spent in vain, nor ever the vision
Came, any more than it comes to all children orphaned on earth,
Till one night, when all hope was dead, they burst into passionate weeping.
“Mother, thy children,” they said, “call thee, and call thee in vain.
Break through the fetters of Fate, take again thy womanly nature ;
Come to us, mother, once more, let us see thee and hear thee again.”
And lo ! as they looked, in the moonlight a shining, beautiful figure
Came in a shallop of gold, on the silvery path of the moon.
Nearer and nearer it came ; but lo ! as they gazed in fond yearning,
Not as their mother it seemed, but a youthful, fairy-like form.
Gold were her locks and blue her eyes, as the clear sky of autumn.
Bitterly weeping, they turned from the lake side with sinking young hearts—
Turned from the lake side, and went, side by side, down the hill paths in silence,
Silent, with never a word, till they came within sight of their home.
Then close behind them they heard a sweet voice, which called to them softly
And, turning round quickly, they saw the mother they loved and had lost.

“Listen, dear sons,” she said. “With what spells you have drawn me ye
know not.

No power but motherly love can bring an immortal to earth,
No other love can avail to reknit the bonds that are broken ;
Only her child’s strong cry calls back a mother again.
Give me your hands and kiss me ; for see, I am old as you knew me,
The youth of those cold depths changed for the kindlier ripeness of earth.
Lo, I am now as I was, when an earthly love kept me among you,
Only I view all things with a clearer and perfecter sight.
Yours, dear sons, it must be to succour your suffering brothers.
Bound to a body which age and disease waste quickly away,
Healers your race shall be, knowing many a secret of Nature,
And all the virtues of herbs, which are sent for the comfort of man.
When ye come to these lonely heights, I will meet you and speak with you always,
Teaching the secrets of life, which are hid from the great ones of earth.
Come to me often, dear sons ; I shall see you afar, and will meet you,
Walk with you always, discourse with you, teach you to live and be wise.
Say to my girls that they cherish their father and comfort him always ;
Bid them remember their mother, who loves as she loved them on earth.
And now, farewell, dear hearts, since to earth your yearnings have brought me.
While you live I will always be with you. Be wise, then, my children, and
good.”

Often at evening, the youths would climb to the mystical lake side,
 Culling the simples that grew on the slopes of the desolate hills—
 “*Pant y Meddygon*,” men called it, “The dingle of the Physicians”—
 And with them, wherever they went, their mother invisible came,
 Teaching them all that 'tis lawful to know of the secrets of Nature
 And the powers of healing that seem to be God's own prerogative gift.
 Such was the knowledge they took from their loving, mystical mother,
 In all our wide Britain was found no leech so skilful as they.
 All the sick of the country around flocked to them to be healed by their cunning ;
 Broad lands in Myddfai and rank the Lord Rhys gave for their skill.
 Often, for years and for years, men might see the gentle Physicians
 Culling the herbs on the hills, to battle with death and with pain.
 From manhood to age they passed, still learning and perfecting knowledge,
 Mounting the hillside at last with slower and tottering steps ;
 And often a shepherd would tell of a clear voice which spoke with them always,
 And oft of a shadowy form, guiding their faltering feet.

So they passed, and were laid in the grave, obeying the mandate of Nature,
 Wrapt round in the sweet, cold earth by the kindly general law.
 Their sons and their sons' sons came, increasing the lore of their fathers ;
 But no kindly Presence came to walk with them over the hills.
 Slowly, through ages of Time, as the fierce glare of knowledge assails it,
 Hardly the fair tale can live in the light of our commoner day ;
 But still through the country side runs the fame of the gentle Physicians.
 The grove of Physician Evan is known in Myddfai to-day.
 “*Llwyn Ifan Feddyg*,” it runs, and another—“*Llwyn Meredydd Feddyg*.”
 Thus, in the old, old tongue, the old, old legend survives.
 The skill, which through centuries lightened the burden of suffering mortals,
 Lacked not memorials still in the hearts of the aged and sick ;
 Nay, in fair Brecknock itself, in the church of far-off Llandefallte,
 Only a century since, were their praises engraved on their tombs.
 Where is the sceptic would doubt the tale of the mystical mother,
 If, five centuries after she went, the Meddygon of Myddfai could heal ?
 Or if living men in their youth, on the first fair Sabbath of August,
 Have thronged from the fair town below to the banks of the mystical lake,
 Hoping to see its still surface boil sudden, the white herds emerging,
 And the golden shallop and oar, and the beautiful Presence of old—
 Hoping, but hoping in vain, yet in simple belief unshaken,
 For had they not witnessed her cures of the weak, and the halt, and the blind ?

But to-day, with its broader light, flouts these beautiful stories romantic.
 No more these fair visions unearthly are seen on the lakes and the hills.
 From knowledge alone is strength ; but 'tis oh for the fair dreams of old time,

The genius which clothed deep truths in fanciful vestures and fair !
 Not more in the legends of Hellas, than these fair myths of the Cymry,
 Are grave truths and precious set in a beautiful framework of song.
 Let them be ; they are fair, they are fine, though they wear not their pearl on
 their foreheads.

Let them be ; they are flowers of our Race, and as is the flower is the fruit.
 Not in the savage tales of the Norseman the Cymry delighted—
 Tales of blood-stained feasts and rude gods, consumed in a furnace of fire—
 But this gentle Physician's story of ruth for suffering mortals,
 Mild wisdom, o'ermastering Fate, young passion, and motherly love.
 Not wholly your tale shall perish, oh kindly Physicians of Myddfai, ²
 Nor the charm of that mystical soul which was born of and lost in the deep ;
 Not wholly, while speech is mine, though the low rays of knowledge shall flout you,
 And in its broad, pitiless glare you dwindle and vanish away.

But still, as I linger and gaze, perusing the exquisite valley,
 Upward by castle and peak, downward by river and town,
 Whether from wooded Cystanog, or yew-shaded graves of Llangunnor,
 Closing the upward gaze, far off lies the mystical steep.
 Many fair scenes lie between us—gray Dryslwyn's verdant hillock,
 Grongar long precious to verse, Dynevor's castle and wood,
 High perched on its precipice-crags the ruins of grim Cerrigcennen,
 Or the green vale higher than these, where the fair Towy winds and unwinds.
 However the gaze ascends, the dark precipice closes the landscape,
 Beneath whose difficult steep lies the haunted abyss of the lake.
 Always the story comes back as I gaze, the beautiful legend
 Which here for long ages of time the wondering peasants believed.
 In yonder churchyard lie those, who ere they were freed from the body,
 Grew strong through their poor brief lives by the gift of the Fair of the lake ;
 And, as the sun moves to the West and defines the deep shades of the hollow,
 I am fired by the fair old tale, till almost I take it for true.

III.

THE CURSE OF PANTANNAS.

'MID fair Glamorgan's hills the close-
 set vales
 Teem with men's works and toil. The
 great shafts rise,
 Belching forth smoke and fire ; the
 labouring beams

Of the great engines slowly lift and
 pause
 And fall with rhythmic beat. The
 labouring town
 Creeps down the winding valley ; the
 poor streets
 Are deep in inky dust. There comes
 no sound
 But children's clamour or the sob or
 shriek

Of the quick-throbbing steam. The
 men are sunk
 Beneath the earth, or sleeping weary
 sleep.
 Toil, toil, or rest from toil, that is the
 sum
 Of those unnumbered lives. Yet are
 they filled
 With joys and griefs as are the great
 on earth,
 And through the teeming village love
 and toil
 Are everywhere ; the poor lives come
 to birth,
 Grow ripe and are deceased, but never
 more
 The face of nature is as 'twas at first.

But on the unfenced hillsides, far
 above,
 The sounds, the dust, the smoke, come
 not at all.
 Still solitude is there, where seldom
 foot
 Of weary toil intrudes ; the keen cool
 air
 Blows fresh and still untainted on the
 hills ;
 Awhile the dark pines climb aloft, then
 stay,
 Like a tired traveller, and naught
 remains
 But short sweet grass and thyme and
 nibbling sheep,
 And mountain torrents hid in deep
 ravines,
 While the swift gaze ranges from vale
 to vale
 Masked by its veil of smoke. And,
 when 'tis night,
 Immense Auroras, glaring o'er the sky,
 Mark where amid the folded hillsides
 lies

The City of the Martyr. Here, where
 still
 The Cymric lore, the Cymric speech
 survive,
 The half-forgotten fables of old time,
 Of gnome and fairy, flourish undis-
 turbed
 Amid the noontide glare of common
 day,
 And one there is reaped from this very
 spot
 And breathing of the race, and it is
 this :—

Long, long ago, the fair-folk on the
 earth
 Were frequent, and their rings upon the
 meads
 Showed green wherever virgin pastures
 were,
 And o'er the leas their elfin music
 thrilled
 Whether of oaten pipe or silvery flute,
 While the young moon was rising on
 the hills,
 And the gay elves footed it merrily
 Upon the dry smooth turf. So oft they
 came,
 Summer and winter, on his sweet short
 grass,
 That one grave churl who at Pantannas
 dwelt,
 Hating the senseless revel and the race,
 In anger to the witch who dwelt hard
 by
 Revealed his case, demanding if she
 knew
 Some potent charm wherewith to free
 his life
 From this insensate mirth of godless
 souls.

Then she, knowing his wish and all
the lore
Of the forbidden books, counselled him
thus :—

“ Wherever on thy pastures shows a
ring
Which tells of elfin revelry by night,
Yoke thy strong oxen, driving straight
through them
Thy ploughs, till all lie fallow. Sow
them thick
With kindly corn fit for the use of
man,
So, when the harvest comes, this tricky
folk,
That hates the newer race of mortal
men
And that which gives them food, will
come no more,
For chiefly the unsullied meads they
love
Where never ploughshare came since
the old time
Ere men were first on earth. So shalt
thou gain
Great harvests for thy wealth, and shalt
disperse
This cursèd people, and shalt reap white
wheat
Till all thy barns o’erflow, and thou
indeed
Art lord of thy own lands far more than
now.
Do thou this thing, and Fortune shall
be thine,
And peace and the full mastery of thy
own.”

So did the churl. He drove his iron
ploughs
Through the inviolate meads, and
straight the sounds

Of dance and song grew silent. Never
more
Came those strange elfin rings upon
his fields,
Nor any traveller passing saw a glimpse
Of those quick-tripping feet ; but far
away
The fair-folk turned, where yet no cruel
share
Was sent to kill the greensward. Spring-
tide came :
The fields grew splendid with the
wheat’s bright green,
When, one day as the sun had kissed
the hills,
The grave churl, turning homeward,
saw a form
Upon his path which threatened him,
and said,
“ Daw dial ! ” “ Vengeance comes ! ”
And in the night,
When all was still, there came a noise
which shook
The house as though ’twould fall, and
the same voice,
“ Daw dial ! ” And when now ’twas
harvest-tide
And the great barns stood open for the
grain,
One night, no ear nor straw was in the
fields,
Only black ashes, and the same strange
form
Met him again, pointing a sword at
him,
And in the same weird accents, “ It
begins,”
“ Nid yw ond dechreu.”

Then the churl, afraid,
Begged for forgiveness, willing that the
fields
Should turn to meads again, whereon
the sprite

Promised at last that he would pray
his king
Forgiveness of the fault, and come
again
On the third day, bringing his lord's
behest.

Now, when the third day came, the
churl went forth
Through his burnt fields, and there
again the elf
Waited, and to the other made report,
"The king's word is for aye unchange-
able,
And vengeance must be done. Still,
since thy fault
Thou dost repent, and hast atoned in
part,
Therefore, not in thy time, nor of thy
sons,
Shall the curse fall, but, poised on
high, await
Thy distant seed." Then he, as one
who hears
Reprieve from death, o'erjoyed sent forth
his hinds
To turn the corn to pasture. Once
again
The dark green rings grew frequent on
the grass,
The gay elves danced, the old melodious
sounds
Of song and music gladdened all the
fields,
And he grew rich and passed in peace-
ful age,
And his sons followed him, and slept in
peace.

But still, when fourscore years or
more had fled,
The dread voice came at times, repeat-
ing still

The self-same threat, "Daw dial!"
"Vengeance comes!"
Oft heard across the years; but since
long use
Obscures the sense, so, when this
warning came
And no harm followed it, the wealthy
squire
Who held Pantannas then, took little
heed
Of half-forgotten memories. His young
son
Rhydderch was come to manhood, and
would wed
Gwen, daughter of Pencraig, and both
their houses
Were fain of it. A noble pair were
they,
In fitted years, and rank, and mutual
troth.
No cloud came on the sky of their
young love,
But all men praised the bridegroom's
gallant port
And the bride's sweetness, and they
made a feast
At gray Pantannas ere the marriage day,
Whereto the fair girl Gwen and all her
kin
Were bidden. It was the wintry
joyous time
Of Yule-tide and the birth-time of the
Lord,
When all hearts, for the sacred season
glad,
Make merry in the fading of the year.
With mirth had sped the feast; all,
round the hearth
Were seated, Gwen and Rhydderch
side by side.
Careless they winged the hours with
tale and song.

The night was still, there came no
 breath of sound,
 Only without the loud unceasing fall
 Of the full river plunging down the
 rocks,
 Only within the noise of mirth and
 song.

Then suddenly they seemed to hear
 a voice
 Above the roaring stream. A silence
 fell
 On all the joyous group. Not as the
 voice
 So often heard it came, but seemed to
 wail
 Some unremembered word. The
 maiden clung
 Close to her lover for a while, and
 then
 The jovial hearth, the jest, the tale,
 the song,
 Chased all their fears, and all was as
 before.
 No sound without but the unceasing
 noise
 Of the full river plunging down the
 rocks.

Then, swift again, above the sounds
 of mirth,
 Above the river roaring through the
 rocks,
 A clear voice, dreadful, pealed, "The
 Time is come!"
 "Daeth Amser!" thus it wailed. And
 all the guests
 Rose to the door, seeking whence came
 the voice,
 And first the goodman went, his worn
 cheek pale
 With fear, remembering the tales he
 heard

In boyhood of the voice. Long time
 they stood
 Expecting, but no voice they heard,
 nor sound,
 But the loud river plunging down the
 rocks.

Till, as they turned them houseward
 once again,
 Above the roaring waters, three times
 heard,
 The same voice pealed, "The Time is
 come! the Time!"
 Then they affrighted and in silence
 went
 Within the house, and then a mighty
 noise
 Crashed round them, and it seemed a
 mighty hand
 Shook all to the foundations. As they
 sat
 In fear, without a word, a shapeless hag
 Stood at the casement. Then one,
 bolder, said,
 "Why comest thou, thou loathely
 thing?" And she,
 "Peace, chatterer, I have naught with
 thee. I come
 To tell the doom which waits this
 cursèd house
 And that which weds with it. But
 since thy tongue
 Is thus injurious, never will I lift
 The veil that doth conceal it." With
 the word
 She vanished, none knew whither.
 When she had gone,
 And all was still again, the cry, the
 cry,
 Rose loud and ceased not. Then a
 deep affright
 Fell upon all, and gloom. The hour
 grew late,

And from the hapless house the trembling guests
 Went on their lonely ways. Rhydderch alone,
 Grown careless in the flush of innocent love,
 Delayed his love's departure, till they went
 Alone at midnight down the haunted vale,
 Across the roaring waters. Unafraid
 The lovers fared, nor voice nor shape of ill
 Assailed them, undismayed, defying all
 The unseen powers of Death and Doom and Ill,
 Strong in the virgin mail of mutual love.

But when the maid was safe within her home,
 And it was time to part, some livelier sense
 Of peril took her, and her boding fear
 Burst forth in tender words. "Dearest," she said,
 "Good-night! Farewell! Some sense of coming ill
 Weighs down my heart. If we should meet no more,
 Or if some long delay should cheat our love,
 I will be faithful always, and will wed
 With thee, and none beside. Ay, though the powers
 Of ill should part us all our lives and leave me
 Widowed of thee!" And he, "Fear not, my life,
 The Power of Love protects us. If I come not
 At once to claim thee, as indeed I hope,

And if the powers of ill have might to part
 Our lives awhile, yet am I true to thee.
 It may be some dark ruin waits our house
 For some forgotten wrong; yet, what care I?
 They cannot touch our lives, these envious powers,
 Nor blight our love. What care I for the rest,
 My treasure, having thee?"
 Then, with a kiss,
 They parted unafraid, and the youth passed
 The ceaseless voices and the roaring stream
 Undaunted, clothed with love, and caring naught
 For things of earth or air.

But as he sped
 Across the self-same fields, which long years past
 The ploughshare broke, hard by some haunted cave
 Beneath the hill, a ring of fairy green
 Before him showed, around him bursts of mirth
 Came of invisible throats, and silvery sounds
 Of elfin music sweet; and, rapt in love,
 And thinking careless of his dear alone,
 He stepped within the circle, and was lost,
 While Time should last, to home, and kin, and love.

For nowhere might his sorrowing parents find
 Trace of their son. They searched the country round,
 Through every grove and brake; they searched the depths

Of the loud plunging stream ; but never
 at all
 They found him. Then, when many
 weeks had gone,
 They sought a hermit in his holy cell,
 And told him all, the wailing cry which
 rang
 Through the sad night, the loathely
 form which came.
 They told him all, and he, with grief
 and tears,
 Knowing what judgment must o'ertake
 the youth,
 Though guiltless, bade the mourners
 hope no more
 To see him, whether in life he was or
 death ;
 And they, lamenting him as lost, at
 last
 Lived their old life, and all was as
 before,
 Till, losing not their sorrow, but bent
 down
 By weight of time, they passed, and in
 the ground
 Were laid, but never again beheld their
 son.

But Gwen, the gentle maiden, when
 she knew
 That which had been, and how her
 love was gone,
 Mourned for him long, and long time
 would lament
 The cruelty of fate, but never at all
 Believed that he was dead, for still she
 held
 That he would come again—it might
 be soon,
 It might be after years, but still would
 come,
 As his word promised. So she dried
 her tears,

Feeding a deathless hope, and every
 day,
 Morning and evening, when the circling
 sun
 Burst from the gates of dawn, or sank
 in night,
 Upon the summit of the scarpèd rock
 Would stand, and scan the landscape
 far and near,
 Seeking her love's return, and, when
 he came not,
 Descend in grief. Year after year she
 came,
 Till from love's casements her unfalter-
 ing soul
 Looked dimly, and the gathering snows
 of time
 Whitened her chestnut locks, yet still
 she came,
 Steadfast, nor failed of hope, while yet
 she could,
 Still looking for her love. Until, at last,
 By the old chapel of the Van, they laid
 Her mortal body and undying hope.

The years slipped by, the undelaying
 years,
 And one by one they passed, the young
 and old
 Who knew the story ; scarcely one was
 left
 To tell of Rhydderch or his fate ; the
 world
 Rolled round upon its course ; young
 lives were born,
 Grew ripe, and faded ; many a youth
 and maid
 Came careless, rapt in love, and read
 the stone
 Which told of Gwen, nor knew what
 powers of ill
 Blighted her life and hope, for never
 more

The elfin music sounded on the leas
Since that dread night of Yule. Another
race,

With other hopes and fears, was on
the earth,

And the old vanished hopes, and fears,
and loves,

Were gone, clean gone, like mist upon
the hills.

* * * *

Then, one fair summer morning,
from the cave

Where, on that sad night four score
years ago,

His footsteps strayed, Rhydderch came
forth again

In all the pride of youth. His heart
beat high

With love and hope, nor felt he any
change,

More than he feels, who, a brief month
or more,

Leaves his loved home. His longing
heart was full ;

He listened to the joyous notes of song
Which the gay thrushes sang, as when
he went

To meet his love. Slow Nature showed
no change,

The old oaks seemed the same, his
sweetheart's home

The same, or hardly changed. The
bitter Past

Touched him no more, who for the
Future looked

And recompense of love. There were
the graves

Beneath the yew, where he in happy
tryst

Had lingered with his love when moon-
rise came,

As soon he should again. "He had
been ill,

Entranced, and the good folk who
tended him,

He knew not where, made light of the
long weeks

Which lay 'tween him and health.
When he was there

'Twas Yule-tide, now 'twas May." He
raised his eyes

To see if there, where then it used to
wait,

A girl's form waited. Something gray
was there,

Half-hidden beneath the yew. Was
it herself ?

He vaulted o'er the wall, and found—a
stone

Gray touched by time, and graven on
it deep

In words half-hid by lichen, the sweet
name

Of her he loved, "Died, aged three-
score years,"

And in some strange year, forty years
to come.

Then not so much a sense of grief
and pain

Took him as fear. He knew not what
had been ;

He knew not what he was. His
throbbing pulse

Grew slower at the chill cold touch of
fate,

And great perplexity and new-born
doubt,

And some half-consciousness of long-
dead years,

As of a dream, enchained him. Soon
he thought

The mists would vanish, leaving all
things clear,

And then the love, the passion of his
youth

Once more would live again. So,
 eagerly
 He left the place of graves, and took
 his way
 Along the well-known paths, to where
 he saw,
 In the old spot—the same, yet not the
 same—
 The roof-tree of Pantannas. Not as
 yet
 Had he seen human face, and a new
 fear
 Came on him, and strange shame, as
 of one come
 From other air than earth's; for now
 he knew
 That either he was dazed and weak of
 brain,
 Or some great change had passed upon
 his life,
 Which nothing but the gaze of human
 eyes
 And the remembered tones of human
 speech
 Might ever again dispel. And so he
 went
 Up the old path, and gained the well-
 known door,
 And in the old room stood again and
 mused,
 Changed—yet the same; but human
 face or voice
 He saw not. All the people were
 afield,
 Nor was there any there to see or hear
 Of those he knew of old. Then, when
 the load
 Of silence grew too great, through the
 still house,
 In his high youthful voice, he called for
 one,
 His childish serving boy, who always
 loved

To follow him, whether with horse or
 hound,
 All day upon the hills, "Ifan, 'tis I,
 I have come back, 'Deuwch yma.'"

 The high voice
 Through the void space resounding
 clear, at last
 Echoed to where, within a sunny nook,
 Bent double with the weight of ninety
 years,
 There dozed an aged man, half deaf,
 half blind,
 And when he heard, his limbs began to
 shake,
 And he to mutter to himself; again
 It came, the old man trembled to his
 feet;
 The third time came the cry, and then
 in haste,
 Tottering, the aged figure, bowed and
 bent,
 Moved quickly to the door, and there
 beheld
 His long-lost master, fair in youthful
 bloom,
 Unchanged, and in his habit as he was
 When all the world was young.

 The old man's heart
 Went out to him, who stood unmoved,
 untouched,
 Not knowing whom he saw. One word
 alone
 He uttered, "Rhydderch."

 And with a flash of light
 The Past revealed itself. The youth
 knew all
 That had been, reading in another's face
 The unnoted flight of Time. His life
 was done;
 He knew it now. All his old longings
 dead;
 Dust was his love, and all his yearnings
 dust;

Dust was his life, and all his body dust.
No more upon the old earth could he
bear

To walk amid the light of garish day,
And when the white-haired man, with
tears of joy,

Would fain have kissed his hand, the
Life in Death

Shrank from the Death in Life, and
fading, left

Naught but a thin dust, lost in empty
air.

Thus side by side they move, the Lives
of Toil

And Fancy. What is Fancy but the
Past

Or Future, bathed in light which never
shone,

Or shall, upon the earth, and yet which
shows

Nearer than real Life, and clearer far—
A Life wherein the terror of the world,
Its mystery, its awe, its boundless
hope,

Are plainer than in ours, wherein the
pang

Of hopeless longing and unmerited pain
Which vex our thought, the blind un-
equal lot

Which takes us, find some vague apo-
logy,

And hope some dim fulfilment, and the
ways

Of Fate are justified, the righteous rise,
The wicked fall? Die not, oh sacred
star

Of Fancy! Show us still the charm,
the awe,

The glamour of our lives, bitterer
griefs,

Joys keener than our own; leftier
heights,

Depths deeper still: keep mystery,
which is

The nurse of knowledge, shading from
the glare

Of the full noontide sun, our tree of
Life!

TO A GAY COMPANY.

A GRASSY little knoll I know,
Before the windows of my home,
Where, when the chill days longer
grow,
And the slow Spring has come,

Forth gleams a golden company
Of lowly blossoms through the grass,
Smiling a welcome back to me
As the soft Spring days pass.

Daily they take the cloudless sun;
With innocent faces free from guile,
And a sweet yearning never done,
They look on him and smile.

And while he shines, the livelong day,
From early morn to failing light,
Stands patiently the dense array,
Content and smiling bright.

But if cold rain or wintry hail
Touch them, the careful petals fold,
Safe where no violence may assail
Their shining cups of gold.

Oh, silent, innocent choir! I seem
To hear your fairy voices rise,
Extolling faint, as in a dream,
Your great Lord in the skies;

And read in your wide-opened eyes
 Strange thoughts and human histories,
 Till from your humble lives seems
 grown
 Life fairer than your own.

Fair celandines, I love to see
 Each year your radiant company
 Bloom golden on the springing grass,
 As the quick seasons pass.

No careless foot shall come to mar
 Your peaceful lives, while life is mine ;
 Still as the Spring-tide comes shall
 shine
 Each multitudinous star,

So like the others, and the dead
 Dear blossoms of forgotten Mays,
 The joyous Springs which now are fled,
 The wondering childish days

When you, a joyous company,
 Or yours, were of an age with me ;
 When marvels filled the earth and sky,
 Nor you could fade, nor I.

Still shall I seem to hear your voice
 Of joyous praise, though all be still ;
 The Spring-time, bidding all rejoice,
 Through you and me shall thrill.

Whether we be alive on earth,
 Or lying hidden in the mould,
 The Spring shall come with throes of
 birth,
 And clothe the fields with gold.

And me, whom the same Maker made,
 Shall no renewal touch ? Shall I
 Beyond all hope decay and fade ?
 Deeper than Spring-tide lie ?

Nay, nay ! the sun shines overhead,
 The Spring-tide calls, the winter's
 done ;
 At last, from close depths dark and
 dread,
 I, too, shall greet the Sun.

FROM JUVENAL.

I READ to-day a Poet dead
 In old Rome, centuries ago ;
 Once more returned the days long fled,
 The dried-up waters seemed to flow.

Once more the keen tongue known in
 youth
 Lashed the gross vices of the time,
 Portraying with a dreadful truth
 The sloughs of sense, the deeps of
 crime.

Great city of the World ! were these
 All that the race has gained of thee—
 Foul lusts and soulless luxuries,
 Fraud, bloodshed, depths of villany ?

Was this what we have left of Rome,
 This blood-stained sink of dark
 offence ?

Nay, still across the ages come
 The high pure tones of innocence :

“ Let nothing ever, base to see or hear,
 Pass the chaste threshold where a
 young soul is ;
 The innocence of boyhood, oh, revere,
 Lest what of vileness you conceive be
 his.

“ Despise not thou his pure and tender
 youth,
 But let his weakness stand 'twixt
 thee and wrong.”

Not wholly wert thou dumb, dread
voice of Truth !
Nor lost, oh sacred ministry of Song !

IGHTHAM MOTE.

THE gray house from the moat around
Rises four-square ; two white swans
glide ;
A falling stream's uncertain sound
Is heard on every side.

A home in an untroubled land,
As 'twas at first it is to-day ;
Unchanged the hushed quadrangles
stand,
Through centuries past away.

The drawbridge and the entrance tower
Are still as in those good old days,
Ere freedom baffled lawless power,
Which dullards love to praise.

So old, so gray, so ripe with time—
Ere the broad cedars on the grass
Came from some new-discovered clime
It saw the centuries pass.

So old and yet so new ; to-day
Flowers of Japan, in gold and white,
Its builders dreamt not of, make bright
Its gradual decay

And rounding into leafy bowers
The laurustinus' bulk is spread ;
A tall tree bending overhead
Its delicate wealth of flowers.

And over every moss-grown stone
A glamour of the dead is cast—
The charm of days deceased and done,
The phantoms of the Past.

A home, a hundred homes in one,
Before our English race grew great,
Before the doughty deeds were done
Which fixed her glorious fate ;

Before the dauntless Buccaneer¹
From Devon dared the Western seas,
And drove the sullen Don in fear,
And robbed his argosies ;

Before the White Rose and the Red,
Ere Crecy proved our England's might,
When scarce the Paynim learnt to
dread
The steel-clad Northern knight.

A hundred tales of good and ill,
Of love and right, of hate and wrong,
The joyance and the dole which fill
The treasure-house of song.

The old knights with their mail were
here,
The dames demure with high-built hair,
The grave ruffed sage, the cavalier
Flaunting his lovelocks fair,

The periwigged and powdered Beau,
The Dame with hoops and patches
brave ;
The generations come and go—
The cradle and the grave.

Our grandsires and our granddames
came ;
They came awhile, their times are
dead,
And we, the modern sir and dame,
Are reigning in their stead.

Unchanged the old grange stands, and
will
When we in turn are past and gone ;

The hurrying years flit by us still,
Life glides unnoticed on.

And what the end? No Geth or
Hun

Can blot the record of thy past ;
Shalt thou, unchanged, untroubled,
last

Till history be done ?

The peasants spared thee, the long
shock

Of warring Roses came not near ;
The Roundhead and the Cavalier,
The King's head on the block,

Thou hast survived. Shall peace o'er-
turn

What banded foemen deigned to spare,
In some deep hate, when all things fair
In one red ruin burn ?

Or shall a wider faith and trust
Bind all, until men recognize
No good but mutual sacrifice,
Nor aim but to be just ?

Thou liest within the net of Fate,
Oh ancient England of our love !
Howe'er the circling world may move,
Thou art, thou hast been great !

THE SECRET OF THINGS.

DID the Race of men descend from a Nature sublime,
From a type which is higher than man and almost divine,
Sinking from higher to lower through æons of time,
Through a hopeless decay and slow unmeasured decline ?

Whence came, then, this downward force to degrade what God gave ?
Can we rest in the thought that we fell from a higher estate ?
Shall the work of His hand grow weaker in time and fade,
And that which was once above death, sink down to the grave ?

And if we are born with the seeds of a deep decay,
Can it ever be stayed, though it were by an Infinite Will ;
Or are all things fated to fade and diminish away
Through all stages of lower life till Creation lies still ?

Or if power there be to stay, and willing for good,
Where then shall be set the limit of gradual shame ?
Not there, maybe, where we think, nor then when we would,
And how shall our being reascend to the height whence we came ?

Or shall this faith rather be ours, that the Infinite Plan
Is worked by a gradual miracle bettering the Race,
Since the quickening Spirit breathed on the sea's dead face,
And the faint life stirred, which one day should blossom in Man ?

It were liker, indeed, to the work of an Infinite Might
To raise all the gradual Past from lower to higher ;
Nay, but where, were it thus, were there room for the heaven-sent light
That, 'midst growing darkness shining, could bid us aspire ?

And what were our profit to rise from the general shame,
If we knew that the Race were doomed to a deeper decay,
Or if millions of lives that are past should wither in flame,
Nor rise from the darkness of Hell to a Heavenly day ?

And does not all Nature teem, not only with types that ascend,
But with those their ineffable fates from a higher ideal degrade,
High archetypes dwindling down, which from higher to lower tend,
Keen organs, and powers of might, which to feeble energies fade ?

Great Universe, what is thy Secret, what are thy Laws ?
Do they dwindle through secular time by the power of an Infinite Will ?
Or do all things to Perfectness tend by a changeless ordinance still,
Impelled by the upward force of an inborn Beneficent Cause ?

But if such were the law of things, how then should any ignore
The self-same embryo growth of man and the lowest ape,
Which an inborn necessity moulds to such difference of being and shape,
That one rises to godlike discourse, one lies soulless for evermore ?

Or shall we believe, indeed, that deep down in the covering earth
May be found, some day, a trace of a Being that once has been,
Which in long-dead æons of time was parent of either birth,
And, in Nature's gradual scheme, stood centred and fixed between ?

Can the Individual rise, though the Race sinks down in disgrace,
And, while all is ruined beside, increase to a heavenly height ?
Can the Individual sink to some dark, ineffable place,
While the Race rises higher and higher in face of the Infinite Light ?

Is the soul of Humanity one with the Individual soul ?
Shall each rise with the other or sink, as the suns are illumined or fade ?
Shall the hand of the Maker show weak as the æons unchangeably roll,
Grown helpless to stay the wreck of the Cosmos itself hath made ?

Nay, from out of the House of despair shall be heard a jubilant voice,
Beneath the deepest depths and hopeless abysses of Ill,
Which in cosmical accents immense, bids all things living rejoice,
And out of the pit of Hell strive onward and upward still.

OH, EARTH!

Ou, earth! that liest still to-night
 Beneath the starlit skies,
 How splendid dost thou loom and
 bright
 To planetary eyes!

But if some storm-cloud, vast and dark,
 Should hide thee from the day;
 If through blind night no faintest spark
 Should force its feeble way,

No other would thy face appear,
 Than on this cloudless sky,
 Though all the world should quake
 with fear,
 Though all our race should die.

Great Universe! too vast thou art,
 Too changeless and too far,
 Dull grows the brain and chill the
 heart
 Before the nearest star.

Oh, kindly earth! upon thy breast
 For ever let me lie,
 Wrapt round with thy eternal rest,
 But gazing on the sky.

ON A BIRTHDAY.

WHAT shall be written of the man
 Who through life's mingled hopes and
 fears
 Touches to-day our little span
 Of seventy years;

Who, with force undiminished still,
 A Nestor stands among his peers,
 Full of youth's fire and dauntless will
 At seventy years;

Who knows no creeping chill of age,
 But, rich in all which life endears,
 Keeps still the patriot's noble rage
 Through seventy years,

The form unbent, the flashing eye,
 The curious lore, the wit that cheers,
 The scorn of wrong which can defy
 His seventy years;

To whom no wound which mars the
 state,
 No humblest neighbour's grief or tears,
 Appeal in vain for love or hate
 These seventy years;

For whom home's happy radiance yet
 A steadfast beacon-fire appears,
 Bright through the storms, the stress,
 the fret
 Of seventy years;—

What else but this? "Brave heart, be
 strong,
 Be of good hope; life holds no fears,
 Nor death, for him who strives with
 wrong
 For seventy years.

Live, labour, spread that sacred light
 Of knowledge which thy soul reveres;
 Fight still the old victorious fight
 Of seventy years.

Live, labour, ripen to fourscore
 While still the listening Senate hears;
 Live till new summers blossom o'er
 These seventy years.

Or if a brighter briefer lot
 Withdraw thee from thy country's
 tears,
 Be sure there is where change is not,
 Nor age, nor years."

IN A LABORATORY.

A MOST intelligent dog I took,
Affectionate, full of caressing grace,
With something of human love in his
look,
And such a trustful, half-human face.

Had learnt tricks, too—would give you
a paw
Where a brother-savant would offer a
hand,
Right or left, as you asked him ; could
understand
Your speech—it might almost fill one
with awe,

Seeing how near to mankind, yet how
far
These dumb and pitiful creatures are ;
How all their faith and belief and love
Is centred in Man as a Lord above.

And looking into his eyes for awhile,
For knowledge is precious and gained
through pain,
I bound him down with a pitying smile,
And deftly removed the left lobe of his
brain.

And then, with all that I had of skill,
I healed it again, so that presently,
Though lame and sick, in his love for
me,
The creature strove to obey my will.

And when I asked him to give me a paw,
He gave the left first, but when for
the right
I asked, his maimed brain failing him
quite,
Gave the left—and I thought I had
touched a Law.

So I persevered, and the brute again,
With a loving, sorrowful look of pain,
Brought the left paw over the helpless
right,
And I marked the effort, with deep
delight.

And having pushed knowledge so far,
again
I divided the opposite lobe of the brain,
And the poor brute, though willing to
offer a paw,
Could no longer obey—and I grasped
a Law.

Later on, still athirst for knowledge,
once more
I carved the weak brain, as I did
before,
Till the poor dumb wretch, as he lay
on his side,
With a loving look regarding me, died.

Poor brute ! may his pain be for know-
ledge, and I,
If I grasp not the clue, yet I may by-
and-by.
Strange how weak Man is, and infirm
of will,
For sometimes I see him and shudder
still !

THE SUMMONS.

MARCH 28, 1884.

AWAY from love of child and wife,
From the first flush of ripening life,
From books and Art, from all things
fair,
From homely joys, from public care,
A low voice summons us away,
And prince and peasant must obey.

Sometimes amid the noonday throng,
Amid the feast, the dance, the song,
Amid the daily wholesome round,
The inevitable accents sound,
And the ear hears the summons come
As his who calls the truant home.

And sometimes in the lonely night
It sounds and brings with it the light.
Alone, with none but strangers nigh,
Comes the cold voice which bids us die;
Sudden, or after months of pain,
And weary vigils spent in vain.

What shall it bring of profit then
To have loomed large in the eyes of
men?

Or what of comfort shall endure,
Save soaring thoughts and memories
pure?

Nought else of thoughts and things that
be

Can solace that great misery.

Oh dreadful summons, full of fear
For weakling mortal souls to hear!
When that last moment shall be ours,
'Mid failing brain and sinking powers,
May one great strength our steps
attend,

The constant presence of a Friend.

SILVERN SPEECH.

THERE are whom Fate's obscure decree
Dooms in deep solitude to be;
For whom no word that mortal spake
The sullen silence comes to break;
And e'en the music of the Spheres
Falls only on unheeding ears.
For them, life's loud processions seem
A noiseless and unmeaning dream.

Around their prison, joyous life
Echoes with noise of fruitful strife.
Yet, to their cells no sound may come,
But all the universe is dumb.
Ah! strange that while all things
rejoice

Man only should be wanting voice!
Ah! strange that morning-song of bird
By living ears is never heard!
Nor mighty master-music dim,
Nor Heaven-thrilled note of soaring
hymn,

Nor rippling laugh of happy child,
Nor the Deep's thunder-voices wild!
Unreached by life's tumultuous sound
Even as the dead, beneath the ground.
And still, though all creation groan,
Unmoved in loneliness alone.

Ah, cruel fate! unequal doom
That sinks the innocent in gloom!
What first the depths of chaos stirred
But the Ineffable Spoken Word?
What else our inmost souls can reach
Like that Divinest Gift of Speech?
Ah, hapless fate that thus deprives
Of half their life unconscious lives!
Ah! could a soft compassion gain
To soothe the victim's lonely pain!

What if with knowledge, love combined,
Can wake the undeveloped mind,
And without speech or sound can teach
The use of sound alike and speech;
To those dumb solitudes profound
Convey some blessed ghost of sound,
And kindle from the dormant sense
Bright sparks of new intelligence;
Assist the undeveloped brain
New loftier summits to attain,
Till knowledge grow the guide of
love,
And love turned Heavenward point
above;

And the illumined soul confess
 The innate love of Righteousness !
 Surely a miracle it is
 Which works so blest a change as this !

THE OBELISK.

UPON the river side,
 Above the turbid stream,
 Which rolls on, deep and wide ;
 Strange as a dream,

The obelisk defies
 Its dim unnumbered years,
 Facing the murky skies,
 Their snows, their tears.

Three thousand years it stood
 Upon the sweet, broad Nile,
 And watched the gliding flood,
 The blue skies smile.

And many a century more,
 Where it of old would stand,
 It lay half covered o'er
 By the hot sand.

Now with signs graven deep,
 In this our Northern Isle,
 Where the skies often weep
 And seldom smile,

Once more again it rears
 Its dim, discrowned head,
 Though all those countless years
 Its life is dead.

Forgotten is the lore
 Its mystic symbols keep ;
 Its builders evermore
 Sleep their last sleep.

Amid this Northern air,
 Beyond the storm-tost sea,
 Where earth nor sky is fair,
 Why shouldst thou be ?

Standing amidst the strife,
 The modern city's roar,
 Memorial of a life
 Dead evermore,

And of the end of all
 That shows to-day so strong,
 The greatness that shall fall,
 After how long ?

The city which to-day
 Shows mightier than thy own,
 Which yet shall pass away,
 Like thine o'erthrown.

And thou ? Where shalt thou be
 When Time has ruined all,
 And Faith and Empery
 Together fall ?

Shalt thou at last find rest
 Beneath the river's flow,
 And mark upon its breast
 New ages grow ?

Or shall some unborn race
 Take thee as prize of war,
 And set thee up to grace
 New cities far ?

Or shall our Northern frost,
 Our chill and weeping skies,
 Sap thee, till thou art lost
 To mortal eyes ?

The Past it is, the Past
 Whose ghost thou comest here :
 The years fleet by us fast,
 The end draws near.

But while the Present flies
 The far-off Past survives ;
 It lives, it never dies,
 In newborn lives.

It lives, it never dies,
 And we the outcome are
 Of countless centuries
 And ages far.

What if our thought might see
 The Future ere it rise,
 The ages that shall be,
 Before our eyes ;

And if incorporate,
 Graven by some mystic hand,
 Our hieroglyph of Fate
 By thine might stand ?

Nay, nay, our Future shows
 Implicitly in thee ;
 For well the thinker knows
 What was, shall be.

And though a ghost thou art,
 'Tis well that thou art here
 To touch each careless heart
 With hope and fear.

A SONG OF EMPIRE.

JUNE 20, 1887.

FIRST Lady of our English race,
 In Royal dignity and grace
 Higher than all in old ancestral blood,
 Bat higher still in love of good,
 And care for ordered Freedom, grown
 To a great tree where'er
 In either hemisphere,
 Its vital seeds are blown ;

Where'er with every day begun
 Thy English bugles greet the coming
 sun !

Thy life is England's. All these fifty
 years
 Thou from thy lonely Queenly place
 Hast watched the clouds and sunshine
 on her face ;
 Hast marked her changing hopes and
 fears ;
 Her joys and sorrows have been always
 thine ;
 Always thy quick and Royal sympathy
 Has gone out swiftly to the humblest
 home,
 Wherever grief and pain and suffering
 come.

Therefore it is that we
 Take thee for head and symbol of our
 name.
 For fifty years of reign thou wert the
 same,
 Therefore to-day we make our jubilee.
 Firm set on ancient right, as on thy
 people's love,
 Unchecked thy wheels of empire on-
 ward move.
 Not as theirs is thy throne
 Who, though their hapless subjects
 groan,
 Sit selfish, caring not at all,
 Until the fierce mob surges and they fall,
 Or the assassin sets the down-trod free.
 Not such thy fate on this thy jubilee,
 But love and reverence in the hearts of
 all.

Oh England ! Empire wide and great
 As ever from the shaping hand of fate
 Did issue on the earth, august, large
 grown !

What were the Empires of the past to
 thine,
 The old old Empires ruled by kings
 divine—
 Egypt, Assyria, Rome? What rule
 was like thine own,
 Who over all the round world bearest
 sway?
 Not those alone who thy commands
 obey
 Thy subjects are ; but in the boundless
 West
 Our grandsires lost, still is thy reign
 confest.
 “The Queen” they call thee, the young
 People strong,
 Who, being Britons, might not suffer
 wrong,
 But are reknit with us in reverence for
 thee ;
 Therefore it is we make our jubilee.

See what a glorious throng they come,
 Turned to their ancient home,
 The children of our England! See
 What vigorous company
 Thou sendest, Greater England of the
 Southern Sea !
 Thy stately cities, sown with domes
 and spires,
 Chase the illumined night with festal fires
 In honour of their Queen, whose happy
 reign
 Began when, 'mid their central roar,
 The naked savage trod the pathless
 plain.
 Thousands of miles, North, South,
 East, West, to-day,
 Their countless herds and flocks un-
 numbered stray.
 Theirs are the vast primæval forest
 depths profound ;
 Yet everywhere are found

The English laws, the English accents
 fair,
 'Mid burning North or cooler Southern
 air.
 A world within themselves, and with
 them blent
 Island with continent.
 The green isles, jewels on the tropic
 blue,
 Where flower and tree and bird are
 strange and new ;
 Or that which lies within a temperate
 air
 As summer-England fair ;
 Or those, our Southern Britain that
 shall be,
 Set in the lonely sea.
 Lands of deep fiord and snow-clad
 soaring hill,
 Where-through the ocean-currents ebb
 and fill,
 And craters vast, from which the
 prisoned force
 Of the great earth-fires runs its dreadful
 course.
 And vales of fern and palm, whence
 rising like a dream
 High in mid-heaven, the ghostly ice-
 fields gleam.

And from her far and wintry North
 The great Dominion issues forth,
 Fit nurse of stalwart British hearts and
 strong ;
 From her black pine woods, deep in
 snow,
 Her billowy prairies boundless as the
 sea,
 Where on the sweet untroubled soil
 Yearly the unnoticed, countless wild-
 flowers blow,
 And by men's fruitful and compelling
 toil

Yearly the deep and bounteous harvests
 grow ;
 From the lone plains, o'er which the
 icy wind
 Sweeps from the North, leaving the
 Pole behind ;
 In whose brief summer suns, so fierce
 they shine,
 Flourish alike the apple and the vine ;
 From teeming ancient cities bright and
 fair,
 Whether in summer's heat or frosty
 wintry air,
 Stamped with the nameless charm and
 grace
 Of a more joyous race ;
 Or on the rounding prairie nestling
 down
 Homestead and frequent new-built
 town.
 Even to those ultimate wilds where
 comes to be
 Another Westminster on the Pacific
 Sea.

Nor shall thy Western Isles
 Be wanting, where the high green
 breakers fall
 Upon the torrid shore, and nature
 smiles ;
 And yet sometimes broods over all,
 Thick woods and hot lagunes with
 steaming breath,
 A nameless presence with a face of
 death.
 Fair balmy Isles, where never wintry
 air
 Ruffles the scentless tropic blossoms
 fair,
 Upon whose sun-warmed fruitful soil
 Our father's dusky freedmen toil.
 Lands of bright plumes that flash from
 tree to tree,

Long creepers trailing thick with
 brilliant bloom,
 And loud upon the forest's silent
 gloom
 The plunging surges of the encircling
 sea.

And from the ancient land
 Scorching beneath the strong unfailing
 sun,
 Round thee thy unnumbered subject
 millions stand ;
 From many a storied city fair,
 Old ere our England, first begun,
 From marble tomb and temple white,
 Built ere our far forefathers were,
 And still a miracle defying Time ;
 Palaces gray with age and dark with
 crime,
 Fierce superstitions, only quenched in
 blood,
 And sweet flower-fancies yearning
 towards the light,
 And lustral cleansings in the sacred
 flood,
 Where by dim temple cool, or shaded
 street,
 From hill or parchèd plain the wayworn
 pilgrims meet.

And from the unhappy Continent
 Which breeds the savage and the
 slave—
 From our enormous South, there shall
 be sent
 A scanty band of strong self-governed
 men.
 And from those poisoned swamps, to-
 day a grave,
 But which one day shall smile with
 plenty, when
 The onward foot of Knowledge, slow,
 sublime,

Has traversed her and set her children
 free
 From ocean to her fabulous inland
 sea,
 And the fierce savage, full of kingly
 grace,
 Is father of a gentler race,
 And peaceful commerce heals the
 wounds of Time,
 And the long history of blood and pain
 Comes nevermore again.

And nearer to thee still, and dearer
 yet,
 Thy people of these little Northern
 Isles,
 Who never shall their Queen forget,
 Nor be forgotten, whether Fortune
 smiles
 Or armed Europe storm around,
 Whom none assail, beyond the waves'
 deep sound,
 Behind their surge-struck ramparts safe
 and free.
 These are thy closest subjects, these
 The brain and heart of Empire, as thy
 Rose
 Within its close-ranged petals comes to
 hold
 A perfumed heart of gold,
 Wherein the seed of the miraculous
 flower,
 Safe hid, defies Fate's power.
 And most of all thy wondrous mother-
 town
 Upon our broad Thames sitting like a
 crown,
 Who, 'mid her healthful labour-laden
 air,
 Grows every day more fair ;
 Whom not for fairness do her children
 prize,
 But for her gracious homely memories—

A nation, not a city, the loved home
 Whereto the longing thoughts of exiled
 Britons come !

What is it that their voices tell ?
 What is it that in naming thee they
 praise ?
 Not wider empire only ; that is well.—
 But there are worthier triumphs,
 peaceful days,
 Just laws, a people happier than before,
 And rolling on untroubled evermore,
 With larger stream, and fuller and more
 free
 The tide of ordered liberty.
 These things than empire higher are,
 Higher and nobler far.

Our old Draconic Law
 With children's blood cemented, no
 more kills
 Its tale of innocent victims. Pitying
 Love
 Amid the abjects deigns to-day to
 move
 Whom no man cared for. If the cruel
 city
 Still claims its thousands, by the out-
 casts stand
 Pure men and women in a gentle band,
 Linked in a ministry of Love and
 Pity.
 No more the insensate State
 Binds down the worker, to exaggerate
 The unequal gifts of Fate,
 But comes instead, some care for
 common good,
 Some glimmering sense of growing
 brotherhood.
 No more half deafened by the unresting
 loom,
 Soulless as is the brute, the pallid
 children pine ;

Nor hapless slaves, half naked, 'mid the
gloom
And grime and squalor of the sunless
mine,
The young girl-workers coarsen, but all
take
Some modest gleam of knowledge,
which may breed
The faith that is above, yet under,
every creed,
And of these humble lives, one day
shall make
True citizens indeed.

Nor shall thy peoples' voice
Keep silence of the salutary change
Which brought the gift of fullest
freedom down
To humble lives, whether by field or
town ;
The potent gift, and strange,
Which wakes alone the wider civic
sense,
Which, more than knowledge, sobers
heart and mind,
And rich and poor in closer ties can
bind,
And knits a nation firm in harmony !
Let civil broils and fiercer dissidence
Come—we are one. What care have
we ?
In speech, in action, we are free.
No mob law need we fear, or senseless
anarchy,
And for all these rejoice.

What law for us has done,
For all our greater England 'neath the
sun,
Let us do now, building on high a
State
Of half the World confederate !

Sure, 'twere the noblest victory of
mind
Thy scattered realms to bind ;
To guide the toiling, hopeless feet
To where is work for all, and life is
sweet ;
To teach our millions their great
heritage,
To call together high world-councils
sage,
Strong as the Priest's, in this our
island-home ;
Then, though the armed world shall
come,
What care, what fear, have we,
Who, being free, are one ; and, being
one, are free ?

If all the wide Earth brings our
millions food,
And if our navies whiten every sea,
If we have rest and wider brotherhood,
All these began with thee ;
And shall, if Heaven so will, still more
increase
With thy remaining years, till blessed
Peace,
Half frightened from us now by grave
alarms
Of half a world in arms,
Shall brood, a white-winged Angel,
o'er the Earth.
Then may the rule of Wrong be
done !
Then may a new and Glorious Sun
Gild the illumined World ! and then
Come Righteousness to men !

Three sovereigns of our English line
Have reached thy length of rule, each
of his name the third,
But never England's heart was stirred
By those as 'tis by thine.

Our Henry died lonely and girt with
foes ;
Our greater Edward fell in dotage ere
life's close ;
And he thy grandsire knew a troublous
time,
A dim pathetic figure ! full of pain
And care too great for mortal to
sustain,
And in his rayless sorrow grown
sublime !

Three Queens have swayed
Our England's fortunes—great Eliza-
beth.

In whose brave times the blast of war
Blew loud and fierce and far.
Her dauntless sailors dared the un-
bounded West,
And fought the Armada's might, and
did prevail,
And wheresoe'er was seen an English
sail
Her Empire was confest ;
And round her gracious throne immortal
flowers of song
Bloomed beautiful, bloomed long,
And left our English tongue as sweet
as it was strong.

And when a century and more had
passed
In blood and turmoil, came a Queen
at last.
Her soldiers and her sailors once again
Conquered on tented field and on the
main,
And once more rose the choir of song ;
Not as the Elizabethan, deep and
strong,
But, tripping lightly on its jewelled
feet,
Issued politely sweet,

And Shakespeare's tongue and Milton's
learned to dance
The minuet of France.

And now again once more
A Queen reigns o'er us as before ;
Again by land and sea
We cast the chequered sum of victory.
Once more our English tongue
Wakes to unnumbered bursts of song.
A great choir lifts again its accents fair,
And to those greater singers, if we find
To-day no answering mind,
'Tis that too large the Present fills the
view,
Yet has its great names too.
Part of the glorious fellowship are we,
The great Victorian company,
Which, since old Cædmon's deep voice
carolled strong,
Through England's chequered story
bore along
The high pure fire of the world's
sweetest song.

But not in the increase
Of Empire, or the victories of peace,
Chiefly we seek thy praise.
But that thy long and gracious days,
Lived in the solitude that hems a throne,
Since thy great sorrow came and left
thee lone,
Were ever white, and free from thought
of blame.
Not once in thy long years shadow of
envy came
On thee, or him, whose stainless man-
hood bore
Thy love's unfading flower. Never
before
In all our England was a royal home
Whereto the loving thoughts of humble
hearts might come.

Thy children's children stand around
thy knees,
Their children come in turn as fair as
these ;
Thy people and thy children turn to
thee,
Knit all in one by bonds of sympathy
With thee, our Queen, are we ;
Therefore we make our solemn jubilee !

Flash, festal fires, high on the joyous
air !
Clash, joy-bells ! joy-guns, roar ! and,
jubilant trumpets, blare !
Let the great noise of our rejoicing
rise !
Gleam, long-illuminated cities, to the
skies
Round all the earth, in every clime,
So far your distance half confuses time !
As in the old Judæan history,
Fling wide the doors and set the
prisoners free !
Wherever England is o'er all the world,
Fly, banner of Royal England, stream
unfurled !
The proudest Empire that has been, to-
day
Rejoices and makes solemn jubilee.
For England ! England ! we our voices
raise !
Our England ! England ! England ! in
our Queen we praise !
We love not war, but only peace,
Yet never shall our England's power
decrease !
Whoever guides our helm of State,
Let all men know it, England shall be
great !
We hold a vaster Empire than has
been !
Nigh half the race of man is subject to
our Queen !

Nigh half the wide, wide earth is ours
in fee !
And where her rule comes, all are free.
And therefore 'tis, oh Queen, that we,
Knit fast in bonds of temperate liberty,
Rejoice to-day, and make our solemn
jubilee ! !

TEMPERANCE.

WHOSO can rule his soul
In prudence still ;
Who can his heart control,
His thought, his will ;

Whom, temperate in all,
Labour and play,
No low desires enthrall
Nor lead astray ;

Seeking the golden mean,
To Duty vowed,—
Ay, though black depths between
Roar dark and loud ;

He shall new pleasures find,
More fruitful far
Than for the undisciplined
And sensual are ;

A kingdom absolute,
A wider sway
Than his whom myriads mute
And blind obey.

For in his soul one voice
Alone is heard,
Which bids his being rejoice,
One perfect word,

Stronger than heated youth,
Mightier than wrong—

The Godlike voice of Truth,
A constant song.

Silence all discords loud
Within the breast !
Fly from the troubled crowd
To peace and rest !

And let the enfranchised soul,
From self set free,
Find in Right's dread control
True Liberty !

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

AN ODE. (JULY 4, 1887.)

WITH soaring voice and solemn music
sing !

High to Heaven's gate let pealing
trumpets ring !

To-day our hands consolidate
The Empire of a thousand years :
Delusive hopes, distracting fears,
Have passed and left her great.
For Britain, Britain, we our jubilant
anthems raise.

Uplift your voices all : worthy is she of
praise !

Our Britain, issuing at the cail of Fate
From her lone islets in the Northern
Sea,

Donned her Imperial robe, assumed her
crownèd state,

Took the sole sceptre of the Free ;
'Mid clang of arms her crescent glory
rose,

By shattered fleet and flaming town :
Victorious at the last o'er all her foes,
Embattled rolls her splendid story
down.

Soldier and seaman, side by side,
Her strong sons, greatly dared and
bravely died.

Close on their steps her dauntless
toilers went

O'er unknown sea and pathless conti-
nent,

Till when the centuries of strife were
done

They left the greatest Realm beneath
the sun.

Praise them and her ; your grateful
voices raise.

Mother of Freedom ! thou art worthy
of our praise !

No more we seek our Realm's increase
By War's red rapine, but by white-
winged Peace ;

To-day we seek to bind in one,
Till all our Britain's work be done —
Through wider knowledge closer grown,
As each fair sister by the rest is known,
And mutual Commerce, mighty to
efface

The envious bars of Time and Place,
Deep-pulsing from a common heart
And through a common speech ex-
pressed,—

From North to South, from East to
West,

Our great World Empire's every part ;
A universal Britain, strong
To raise up Right and beat down Wrong.
Let this thing be ! who shall our Realm
divide ?

Ever we stand together, Kinsmen, side
by side !

To-day we would make free
Our millions of their glorious heritage.
Here, Labour crowds in hopeless
misery,—

There, is unbounded work and ready
wage.

The salt breeze, calling, stirs our
Northern blood,—

Lead we the toilers to their certain
good ;

Guide we their feet to where

Is spread for those who dare

A happier Britain 'neath an ampler
air.

Uprise, O Palace fair !

With ordered knowledge of each far-
off land

For all to understand !

Uprise, O Palace fair, where for the
Poor shall be

Wise thought and love to guide o'er
the dividing sea !

First Lady of our British race !

'Tis well that with thy peaceful Jubilee

This glorious dream begins to be.

This thy lost consort would ; this
would thy son,

Who has seen all thy Empire face to face
And fain would leave it One.

Oh, may the Hand which rules our Fate

Keep this our Britain great !

We cannot tell, we can but pray

Heaven's blessing on our work to-day.

Uprise, O Palace fair, where every eye
may see

This proud embodied Unity !

For Britain and our Queen one voice
we raise,—

Laud them, rejoice, peal forth : worthy
are they of praise !

DAVID GWYN.

DAVID GWYN was a Welshman bold who pined a slave in the hulks of Spain,
Taken years since in some mad emprise with Francis Drake on the Spanish
main.

Long in that cruel country he shared the captive's bitter and hapless lot ;
Slowly the dead years passed and left him dreaming still of the days that were
not,

Of tiny Radnor, or stately Brecknock, or Cardigan's rain-swept heights may
be,

Or green Caermarthen, or rich Glamorgan, or Pembroke sitting on either
sea.

Sickening within his squalid prison, while still as the circling seasons came
The fierce sun beat on the brown Sierras, springtide and summer and autumn
the same,

Almost hope failed the dauntless sailor, chained in an alien and hateful land,
Lonely and friendless, starved and buffeted, none to pity or understand,
Pining always and ageing yearly as slow Time whitened and bowed his head,
While longing and hate burned high and higher as life sank lower and hope fell
dead,

With brutes for his gaolers, and fiends for his fellows, chained to him ceaselessly
night and day,

Eleven autumns, eleven winters wasted their wearisome length away.

Then there awoke round his floating prison clang of hammers and bustle of men
Shipwrights labouring late and early woke old thoughts in his heart again.

"Spain will lay waste your heretic island with fire and sword ere the winter be
come,

And you and the rest of your felon crew shall row the galleys which sack your
home."

The hot blood flushed to the prisoner's forehead, but never a word in reply
said he,

Toiling obediently days and weeks till the great fleet sailed on the summer sea
Splendid galleons towering skyward with gilded masts and with streamers brave,
Floating proudly to martial music over the blue Lusitanian wave,
Four great galleys leading the van, and in one midst the close-thronged benches
sate

David Gwyn, a forgotten oarsman, nursing a burning heart of hate.

So along the windless ocean slow the great Armada sped,
Two unclouded weeks of summer blazed the hot sun overhead.
Hourly from the high deck-pulpits preaching rose and chant and prayer,
And the cloying fumes of incense on the brisk Atlantic air ;
Courtiers fine and sea-worn sailors jesting the slow hours away,
Silken sails and blazoned standards flapping idly day by day,
And within his high poop-turret, more than mortal to behold,
The High Admiral Medina lounging idly, clothed with gold :
Not a thought of peril touched them, not a dream of what might come,
Proudly sailing, sure of conquest, with the benison of Rome,
And far down among the oarsmen's benches, fainting, desperate,
David Gwyn, a patriot helpless with a burning heart of hate.

With the roaring Bay of Biscay louder winds and greyer skies,
And the galleons plunge and labour, and the rolling mountains rise ;
Blacker loom the drifting storm clouds, fiercer grow the wind and sea,
Far and wide the galleons scatter, driving, drifting helplessly.
Higher mount the thundering surges ; tossed to heaven, or fathoms down,
Rear or plunge the cumbrous galleys while the helpless oarsmen drown.
Like a diver the *Diana* slides head first beneath the wave,
Not a soul of all her hundreds may her labouring consorts save.
Now to larboard, now to starboard, shattered, tost from side to side,
Helpless rolls the great Armada, shorn of all its pomp and pride.
Down between those toppling ridges, groaning, straining in his place,
David Gwyn among the oarsmen sits with triumph in his face.

Then amid the roaring seas, when hope was gone and death was near,
And the hearts of all the Spaniards sinking, failing them for fear,

Boldly to the haughty Captain, David Gwyn the oarsman went,
Veiling with a fearless frankness all the depth of his intent.
“Quick, Señor! the ship is sinking; like her consort will she be,
Buried soon with slaves and freemen, fathoms deep beneath the sea.
Give me leave and I will save her; I have fought the winds before,
Fought and conquered storms and foemen many a time on sea and shore.”
And the haughty Captain, knowing David Gwyn a seaman bold,
Since upon the Spanish main the foemen sailed and fought of old,
Answered, turning to his prisoner: “Save the ship, and thou shalt gain
Freedom from thy life-long fetters, guerdon from the Lord of Spain.”
Then from out the prisoner’s eye there flashed a sudden gleam of flame,
And a light of secret triumph o’er his clouded visage came,
Thinking of his Cymric homestead and the fair years that were gone,
And his glory who should save her from the thralldom of the Don.
“I will save your ship,” he answered; “trust me wholly, have no fear:
Pack the soldiers under hatches; leave the main deck free and clear.”
Doubting much the Don consented; only, lest the slaves should rise,
By each oarsman sat a soldier, watching him with jealous eyes.
Little knew he of the cunning, secret signs, and watchwords born
Of long years of cruel fetters, stripes and hunger, spite and scorn.
Little thought he every prisoner as in misery he sat
Hid a dagger in his waistband, waiting for the call of Fate.

David Gwyn, the valiant seaman, long time battled with the main,
Till the furious storm-wind slackened and the ship was safe again.
Sudden then he gave the signal, raised his arm and bared his head.
Every oarsman rising swiftly stabbed his hapless warder dead,
Seized his arms, and, fired with conquest, mad with vengeance, like a flood
On the crowded ’tween-decks bursting, left the Spaniards in their blood.
David Gwyn was now the Captain, and the great ship all his own;
Well the slaves obeyed their comrade, thus to sudden greatness grown.
Straight for France the stout *Vasana* shaping, sudden on her lee
Don Diego in the *Royal*, foaming through the stricken sea,
Driven by full four hundred oarsmen, nigh the monstrous galley drew.
Then from out her thundering broadside swift the sudden lightning flew;
In among Gwyn’s crowded seamen straight the hurtling missiles sped;
Nine strong sailors in a moment lay around their Captain dead.
David Gwyn, the dauntless Captain, turning to his comrades then—
“God has given you freedom; earn it: fear not; quit yourselves like men.
Lay the ship aboard the *Royal*: free your comrades and be free.”
The strong oarsmen bent, obedient, rowing swiftly, silently,
Till, as if in middle ocean striking on a hidden rock,
All the stout *Vasana*’s timbers, quivering, reeling with the shock,

Straight on board the crowded *Royal* leapt that band of desperate men,
 Freed the slaves, and left no Spaniard who might tell the tale again ;
 And the sister galleys stately with fair winds sped safely on,
 Under David Gwyn, their Captain, and cast anchor at Bayonne.
 And King Henry gave them largesse, and they parted, every one
 Free once more to his own country, and their evil days were done.

David Gwyn to England coming won the favour of the Queen ;
 Well her Grace esteemed his valour in the perils that had been.
 What ! had those swift, mighty galleys, which could wind and tide defy,
 Winged with speed the slow Armada when our weak fleet hovered by ?
 Had not then that sullen quarry, ploughing helpless on the plain,
 Turned and crushed the nimble hunters, and rewrit the fate of Spain ?
 Who shall tell ? But his were doughty deeds and worthy lasting fame,
 Though the country he delivered never yet has known his name.

Did he seek again the home of his youth, did he let the years go peacefully by,
 Breathing the sweet clear air of the hills, till his day was done and he came to die ?
 By tiny Radnor, or stately Brecknock, or Cardigan's rain-swept heights may be,
 Or green Caermarthen, or rich Glamorgan, or Pembroke sitting on either sea ?
 Did he dream sometimes 'mid the nights of storm of those long-dead years in the
 hulks of Spain,

That stealthy onset, that dread revenge, with the wild winds drowning the cries
 of pain ?

Did the old man shudder to think of the blood, when the knife pierced deep to
 the Spaniard's heart ?

Nay, to each of us all is his Life assigned, his Work, his Fate, his allotted Part

SONG.

FAREWELL ! farewell ! Adown the
 ways of night
 The red sun sinks, and with him takes
 the light ;
 O'er the dull East the gathering shadows
 grow,
 And turn to gray the Western after-
 glow.

Farewell ! farewell ! But Day shall
 come again ;
 Shall hope then die, and prayers be
 breathed in vain ?
 Our faithful hopes outlive the fleeting
 day ;
 Stronger than Life and Death and Time
 are they.
 Ah ! see the last faint ray has ceased to
 flame.
 Courage ! our parted souls are still the
 same.

Round is the earth, and round the
estranging sea,
And Time's swift wheel which brings
thee back to me.

Come back ! Come back climbing the
Eastern sky !

Our souls are deathless though our flesh
shall die.

Winged are our thoughts, and flash forth
swift and far

Beyond the faint light of the furthest star.

Come back ! or if we meet in some
strange place,

On some dim planet, I shall know thy
face ;

By some weird land, or unimagined sea,
I shall not be afraid, dear, having thee.

THE ALBATROSS.

UPON the lone Australian shore,
A chance-sent traveller's careless eye,
Saw a white bird swoop down and lie
With wide wings that should soar no
more.

A feeble quiver shook the bird,
A film the glazing eye o'erspread ;
Once more the pearly plumage stirred,
And then the Albatross was dead.

He spread the giant pinions wide,
When 'neath the snowy down he found
By hands unknown securely bound,
A sea-worn missive safe and sound.

And when the blotted page he read,
This message bore it from the sea—
"Five shipwrecked sailors, mourned as
dead,
A thousand miles from land are we ;

"Whoe'er thou art whose hand shall
take

Our poor winged messenger, we pray
That thou wilt spare him for our sake,
And send him scatheless on his way.

"Hardly we hope our words shall find
Response, save by some blessed chance ;
Good friend who readest this be kind,
And speed us to our well-loved France."

The traveller stood and musing read,
Some new-born pity filled his breast,
Seeing that poor envoy lie at rest,
The living speaking thro' the dead.

And soon to save those helpless men,
A stout ship, many a weary mile
Sailed forth, and found their lonely isle,
And sped them to their homes again.

But I, as o'er this tale I stay
My wandering fancy, seem to hear,
A voice which comes my heart to cheer,
A silent voice which seems to say,

"Thus is it with the world around,
For tho' the messenger be gone,
Some winged thought with his being
bound,

O'er all the world goes echoing on.

"And though its tones sound faint and
weak,
Lost in the rude world's clamorous strife,
The message of dead lips can speak
To souls in prison, words of life !"

IN A GREAT LADY'S ALBUM.

FLIT softly, Muse, on hesitating wing,
Through this fair pleasaunce, vowed to
Prince and King.

Here, ranged apart, as in some leafy
glade,
Monarchs and statesmen court the
grateful shade ;
Poets and warriors side by side are
found,
And the grove echoes with harmonious
sound.
Science, with steady gaze and tranquil
eye,
And Faith triumphant soaring to the
sky,
The immemorial East delights to bring
Its tribute to the clear Castalian spring.
Where'er we stray some nobler foot has
trod,
And the awed gazer knows a demi-
god.

Dreadst thou with daring pinion to in-
vade
The solitudes for finer natures made ?
Nay, halt not ! Spread thy wings and
raise thy song !
Better the feebly right than basely
strong ?
Thou, too, art like to these, and with
them one
In nature, as the star is with the Sun.
Here whoso greatly daring enters in,
This truth shall learn, "the whole wide
world is kin."
From Prince to boor, old East, and
larger West,
One Truth, one Right, one Wisdom is
confest ;
One hate of Wrong, one love of nobler
Thought ;
One reverence for the universal Ought ;
One worship of the one pervading Name,
Through varying voices heard and yet
the same !

ON A SILVER WEDDING.

MARCH 10, 1888.

THE rapid tide of gliding years
Flows gently by this Royal home,
Unvexed by clouds of grief and tears
Its tranquil seasons come.

To one, as happy and more great,
Came earlier far, the dread alarm,
The swift immedicable harm,
The icy voice of Fate.

The gracious father of his race
Heard it, too soon, and dared the night ;
Death coming found him with the light
Of Sunshine on his face.

He left his widowed Queen to move
Alone in solitary sway,
Alone, through her long after-day,
But for her people's love.

Their saintly daughter, sweet and mild,
Drew poison from her darling's breath ;
Their young son trod the paths of death
Far, far from love and child.

Nay, now by the Ausonian sea,
Daughter of England, good and wise !
Thou watchest, with sad anxious eyes,
Thy flower of chivalry !

But this fair English home no shade
Of deeper sorrow comes to blot,
No grief for dear ones who are not,
Nor voids which years have made.

One sickness only, when its head
Lay long weeks, wrestling sore with
death,
And pitying England held her breath
Despairing, round his bed

No regal house of crownèd state,
Nor lonely as the homes of kings
Where the slow hours on leaden wings
Oppress the friendless great.

But lit with dance and song and mirth,
And graceful Art, and thought to raise,
Crushed down by long laborious days,
The toiler from the earth.

Its Lord an English noble, strong
For public cares, for homely joys,
A Prince among the courtly throng,
A brother with his boys.

Who his Sire's footsteps loves to tread,
In prudent schemes for popular good ;
And strives to raise the multitude,
Remembering the dead.

And having seen how far and wide
Flies England's flag, by land and sea,
Would bind in willing unity
Her strong sons side by side.

Its gentle mistress, fair and sweet,
A girlish mother, clothed with grace,
With only summer on her face,
Howe'er the swift years fleet.

Who was the Vision of our youth,
Who is the Exemplar of our prime,
Sweet Lady, breathing Love and Truth,
With charms which vanquish Time.

Good sons in flowering manhood free,
Girls fair in budding womanhood,
An English household bright and good,
A thousand such there be !

Great Heaven, how brief our Summers
show !
And fleeting as the flying Spring !

The almonds blush, the throstles sing,
The vernal wind-flowers blow.

And yet 'tis five-and-twenty years,
Since those March violets dewy-sweet,
Were strewn before the maiden's feet,
Amidst a people's cheers.

And mile on mile the acclaiming crowd
Surged round her, as the soft Spring air
With joy-bells reeled, and everywhere
Roared welcome deep and loud.

While this, our trivial life to-day,
Loomed a dim perilous landscape
strange,
Hid by thick mists of Time and Change,
Unnumbered leagues away.

Long years ! long years ! and yet how
nigh
The dead Past shows, and still how far
The Future's hidden glimpses are
From mortal brain and eye.

What secrets here shall Time unfold ?
What fates befall this gracious home ?
Shall to-day's festal once more come,
Ripened with time to gold ?

Heaven send it ! Close-knit hearts are
here,
Not that old hate of sire and heir ;
Here flourish homely virtues fair,
And love that conquers fear.

For these may Fortune grant again
Their Sovereign's large and blameless
life,
Unmarred by care, undimmed by strife,
Less touched than Hers by pain !

High set above the noise and dust
Of Faction, and contented still
To guide aright the popular will,
By sympathy and trust !

Through civic wisdom temperate,
And forethought for the general need,
Keeping midst change of politic creed,
A Throne, a People great !

THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA, 1588.

'Tis a fair eve at midsummer, three hundred years ago,
Drake and his bold sea captains all are out on Plymouth Hoe ;
They are busy at bowls, brave gentlemen, with jovial mirth and jest,
When watching eyes spy far away a sail upon the West.

A sail ! ten sail ! a hundred sail ! nay nigh two hundred strong !
And up the sea they swiftly climb in battle order long ;
Their high main-royals rake the skies, as in a crescent wide,
Like a thick wood, full seven miles broad, they sail on side by side.

There is swift alarm and hurry then, but never a thought of fear,
As the seamen, with the falling night, behold the Don draw near.
"Ring out the bells," cries Hawkins, and across the darkling main,
England peals out defiance to the gathered hosts of Spain.

They do not fear the Don, not they, who on the Spanish main,
Have fought his might and lowered his pride, again and yet again ;
And yet 'tis fearful odds they face, when they sail forth to meet,
Spain and her great Armada with the puny English fleet.

And the streets grow thronged with seamen, and the crowds begin to shout,
And quick oars dash and sails are set, before the stars come out.
They weigh their anchors with a will, and out they speed to sea,
Where up the Channel, stately, slowly, forge the enemy.

Now St. George for merry England, and St. James for Papal Spain,
Our seamen are our chiefest hope, nor shall we trust in vain.
We have quenched the fires of Smithfield, and no more, 'fore God, we swear,
Shall they ever again flame upward, through our sweet, free, English air.

Now when they neared the foeman, as he loomed across the sea,
Lord Howard led the English van, a Catholic Lord was he,
And his great Ark Royal thundered out her broadsides loud and long,
With Drake and Frobisher hard by, and heroes in a throng.

But never a gun the Spaniards fired, but silent ploughed and slow,
As bisons in a sullen herd across the prairies go ;
And behind them close, like hunters swift, with hounds that snarl and bite,
The English squadrons followed through the breezy summer night.

They could see the Dons' high lanterns, in a brilliant crescent flare,
They could catch the Black Friars' moaning chant upon the midnight air.
All night they pressed them close, and ere the sun began to flame,
Long miles away, by blue Torbay, the warring galleons came.

Soon as the dawn began to glow, the guns began to roar,
All day the thundering navies fought along the Dorset shore,
Till Portland frowned before them, in the distance dark and grim,
And again the night stole downward, and the ghostly cliffs grew dim.

And already, praised be God, who guides the patriots' noble strife,
Though not an English flag is lost, and scarce an English life,
De Valdez yields his ship and sword, and into Weymouth Bay,
They tow Oquenda's burning bark, the galleon of Biscay.

Day fades in night, 'mid stress of fight, and when to waking eyes,
Freshwater's ghostly sea cliffs, and the storm-worn Needles rise,
From a score of sheltered inlets on the smiling Solent sea,
England comes forth to aid her sons, with all her chivalry.

There sails my Lord of Cumberland, and he of Oxford too,
Brave Raleigh and Northumberland, and Grenville and Carew.
As to a field of honour hasten knights of deathless fame,
To meet the blue blood of Castile, the flower of England came.

Then with the wind, the foe faced round, and hissing o'er the blue,
Forth from his lofty broadsides vast his hurtling missiles flew ;
Long time the fight confusedly raged, each man for his own hand ;
St. George ! protect our country, and the freedom of our land !

See here round brave Ricaldes thick the English levies press !
See there the keels from London town, hemmed round and in distress !
Such thunder sure upon the seas was never heard before,
As the great ordnance smite the skies with one unceasing roar !

Now when the fifth day of the fight was come, St. James's Day,
The sea was like a sheet of glass, the wind had died away,

And from out the smoke clouds looming vast, churning the deep to foam,
Driven by three hundred oars the towering galliasses come.

But ere they neared the English line, a furious iron hail
Of chain-shot and of grape-shot crashed through mast and oar and sail ;
No more they could, they turned and fled, upon our English sea,
Not yet such furious hatred raged, or stubborn bravery.

And upon the steep white walls of cliff and by the yellow sand,
With pike and musket hurrying down the sturdy peasants stand,
And the trembling women kneel and call upon the Holy name,
And watch the thick black cloud which bursts in murderous jets of flame.

Now St. George for our old England ! for the Don has turned and fled,
With many a strong ship sunk or burnt, and gallant seaman dead,
And by the last day of the week, the warring squadrons lie,
The foeman moored in Calais roads, the English watching by.

They sent for aid to Parma, for they were sore beset,
But the Duke was at St. Mary's shrine, and could not succour yet,
For by Nieuport and by Dunkirk, stern, immovable as Fate,
With stalwart ships, and ordnance strong, the Dutchmen guard the gate.

Now that great Sabbath dawns at last, and from the foeman's fleet,
The deep mass-music rises, and the incense sickly-sweet,
And beneath the flag of England, stern, with dauntless hearts and high,
The seamen take the bread and wine, and rise prepared to die.

Then came Lord Henry Seymour, with a message from Her Grace,
And Sir Francis read the missive with grave triumph on his face,
And he swore an oath, that come what would, her orders should be done
Before the early rose of dawn proclaimed the coming sun.

And the summer daylight faded, and 'twas midnight on the wave,
And among the close-moored galleons, all was silent as the grave,
And the bright poop lanterns rose and fell with the breathing of the deep,
And silent rode the towering hulls, with the weary crews asleep.

When two brave men of Devon, for Sir Francis bade them go,
With all sail set before the wind, stole down upon the foe ;
And before the drowsy watchmen woke, the swift destruction came,
As with a blaze of wildfire leapt the fireships into flame !

Then from the close-thronged ships of Spain loud cries of terror rise,
As from their burning ranks the glare flares upward to the skies,
With cables cut, and sails half set, they drift into the night,
And many are crushed, and many burn, and some are sunk outright.

And the watchers on the Dover Cliffs know well what thing has been,
And for noble England cheer aloud, and for her Maiden Queen.
No more, no more, great England, shalt thou bow thy head again
Beneath the Holy Office and the tyranny of Spain !

And the conquering English followed, and upon the Flanders shore,
Hopeless the shattered galleons fought, till fight they could no more.
And some went down with all their crews, and some beat helplessly
Upon the yeasty quicksands of the perilous Northern Sea.

Then Sidonia with the remnant, shattered ships and wounded men,
Fled northward, with the foe in chase, hoping for Spain again ;
But by the Orkneys, lo ! the Lord blew with a mighty wind,
And on the cruel Irish West they left two score behind.

And the savage kerns of Desmond, when the stormy winds were o'er,
Robbed the thronged corpses of the great, upon the lonely shore.
There, in his gold-laced satins, lay the Prince of Asculè,
'Mid friars, and seamen drowned and dead, and Dons of high degree.

Or faint with hunger and with thirst, though rescued from the wave,
The haughty Spaniards knew in turn the misery of the slave.
They ate the captives' bitter bread, they who brief weeks ago
Sailed forth in high disdain and pride to lay our England low.

And the scattered remnant labouring back to Spain and life again,
Left fourscore gallant ships behind and twice ten thousand men ;
And when in dole and misery this great emprise was done,
There was scarce a palace in all Castile which did not mourn a son.

Let not their land forget the men who fought so good a fight !
Still shall our England keep undimmed their fame, their memory bright.
And if again the foemen come in power upon the main,
May she find sons as strong as those who broke the might of Spain !

ODE SUNG AT THE FIRST CO-OPERATIVE FESTIVAL.

AUGUST 17, 1888.

COME let us sing together a new song,
The triumph of the weak made strong ;
The victories of peace we celebrate,
Not those of war and hate.

The victories of peace, won after many
days :

Let us our voices tune to joy and
praise ;

Come let us sing a new and happy
song!

Time was when by his too-great toil
bowed down,

The worker feared his master's frown ;
For some scant wage chained to his
hopeless task,

Nor ever dared to ask

For his young lives and piteous gains
afraid,

A fitting share of that his hands had
made ;

But now through union strong, the
workers claim their own.

There is red war not fought with sword
or gun,

Where, in deep peace, war's wrong is
done ;

Where face to face in hostile camps
they stand

Who should clasp hand with hand :

The rich man waning slow in soulless
ease,

The poor man spent by toils and
miseries.

Sing we a cheerful song, Time's curse
is almost done.

Ay, almost done, but ah ! not wholly
yet ;

Let not too sanguine souls forget
Those for whom no man taketh thought
or heed,

The hearts, the lives that bleed.

Let not our workers, strong in brother-
hood,

Forget the friendless toiler's starving
brood.

Mixt be our song with joy, yet not all
cheerful yet.

Yet for to-day, at least, let us rejoice,
Uplifting jubilant heart and voice.

Not what has been we hymn, but what
shall be ;

Not the old misery,

But the new days when Man beneath
the power

Of peaceful union blooms a perfect
flower—

For this we choose not sorrow, but
rejoice.

We come to-day in this our solemn
mirth,

Bringing the flowers, the fruits, of earth,
Reared by strong hands which labour
glorifies.

Toil, honest toil we prize—

Look round and see how rich the har-
vest grows,

The mellow fruits, the perfumed rose
that glows

Raised by untiring toil from our good
mother Earth.

See how to-day the long drawn vistas fill
With fruit of every toiler's skill,

The man's strong gains, the woman's
deft and fine ;

Here heart and brain combine

In pitying succour for the weak and dumb ;
 Here are fair schemes, to build the happy home,
 And children's work, and play, than work more precious still.

Therefore do we make merry and are glad ;

No care to-day shall make us sad.
 We sing the song of wider brotherhood,
 Knit close for general good.
 We sing the higher social sense which binds

Each for the general good, opposing minds.

We hail thee, blessed Union, and are glad !

And sing aloud together a new and cheerful song !

TO JOHN BRIGHT.

MARCH 27, 1889.

FRIEND of the friendless else, and art thou dead ?

Great Master of our vigorous Saxon speech,

Unwearied pleader for the people's bread,

Hater of war, strong to convince and teach,

With passionate faith and indignation strong,

Mighty to slay the hydra-heads of wrong.

Thy voice was aye for Freedom, and thy heart

Warlike for Peace, since o'er the open grave

Of thy young love, thou didst accept thy part

To strike the shameful fetters from the slave,

To lift the toiler from his hopeless lot,

To plant the civic sense where it was not.

Thy soul was reared on fitting food ; thy tongue,

Touched with our older England's purest fire ;

The noblest strains our Island Muse has sung,

Shakspeare and Milton did thy speech inspire ;

The poets taught thy rhythmic periods strong ;

And thy impetuous flights were winged with song.

Thou couldst not brook the faithless souls that dread

To follow Right and leave the rest to God ;

No selfish fear of careless riches bred Might turn thee from the path by

Duty trod.

England thou lovedst, and beyond set of sun

A greater England still, and both made one !

Thy friend and comrade went his way alone ;

Long years ago God called him, and he went.

To him thy speech has reared, than sculptured stone,

A statelier and more lasting monument.

Long time were ye reviled, scorned,
hated ; now
A people's homage crowns each
reverend brow.

Champion of Freedom, by thy hearse
shall I

Keep silence—I who owe thee much
indeed ?

A Prince among the People comes to
die,

And shall no grateful son of verse
take heed ?

Nay, on thy grave, ere falls the
earth, I lay

This simple wreath to deck thy
honoured clay !

ON ROBERT BLAKE.

ENGRAVED ON THE BRASS IN ST.
MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

KINGDOM or Commonwealth were less
to thee

Than to crown England Queen o'er
every sea.

Strong sailor, sleeping sound as sleep
the just,

Rest here ! our Abbey keeps no wor-
thier dust !

TO LORD TENNYSON:

ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY,
AUGUST 6, 1889.

MASTER and seer ! too swift on noise-
less feet

Thy hurrying decades fleet with
stealthy pace ;

Yet not the less thy voice is clear and
sweet,

And still thy genius mingles strength
with grace.

On thy broad brow alone and
reverend face

Thy fourscore winters show, not on thy
mind.

Stay, Time, a little while thy head-
long chase !

Or passing, one Immortal leave behind ;
For we are weak, and changeful as the
wind.

For him long since the dying swan
would sing,

The dead soul pine in splendid misery.
He winged the legend of the blameless
King,

And crossed to Lotusland the en-
chanted sea ;

Heard the twin voices strive for
mastery,

Faithful and faithless ; and with pre-
scent thought

Saw Woman rising in the days to be
To heights of knowledge in the past
unsought ;

These his eye marked, and those his
wisdom taught.

And he it was whose musing ear o'er-
heard

The love-tale sweet in death and
madness end ;

Who sang the deathless dirge, whose
every word

Fashions a golden statue for his
friend.

May all good things his waning years
attend

Who told of Rizpah mourning for her
dead !

Or in verse sweet as pitying ruth
 could lend
 The childish sufferer on her hopeless
 bed ;
 Thoughts, pure and high, of precious
 fancy bred.

His it is still to scan with patient eye
 The book of Nature, writ with herb
 and tree ;
 The buds of March unfold, the lush
 flowers die,
 When sighs of Autumn wail o'er land
 and sea,
 And those great orbs which wheel from
 age to age,
 Cold, unregarding fires that seem to
 blight
 All yearning hope and chill all noble
 rage ;
 And yet were dead, and void, maybe,
 of light,
 Till first they swam upon a mortal's
 sight.

Master and friend, stay yet, for there is
 none
 Worthy to take thy place to-day, or
 wear
 Thy laurel when thy singing-days are
 done.
 As yet the halls of song are mute and
 bare,
 Nor voice melodious wakes the tune-
 less air,
 Save some weak faltering accents faintly
 heard.
 Stay with us ; 'neath thy spell the
 world grows fair.
 Our hearts revive, our inmost souls are
 stirred,
 And all our English race awaits thy
 latest word !

TO HER MAJESTY THE
 QUEEN,

REVISITING WALES.

AUGUST 24, 1889.

WELCOME, dear Lady, welcome once
 again,
 To thine own land—nor for the last
 time come.
 Small is our Gwalia, but a fair domain,
 Who comes to her comes home.
 Come now and often, still our warm
 hearts burn,
 Though the swift winters close or dim
 the eyes
 That saw thee last ; to thee our spirits
 turn,
 Still to our lips true words of welcome
 rise.
 Dear Lady ! welcome, welcome home !
 Our Cymric eyes grow bright to see
 our Sovereign come.

Once long ago, didst thou, a careless
 child,
 With smooth young brow on which the
 Imperial Crown
 Weighed not as yet, amidst our hill-
 sides wild
 Abide, and with thine own
 Didst spend thy Springtime's joyous
 hours and bright,
 Safe-guarded by a mother's tender care.
 Then all the unfolding world showed
 clear and fair
 To thy unwearied mind and eager sight ;
 Ah ! it is blest indeed to be
 In life's young morn with all fair things
 to see !

And then thou camest to thy Wales
 once more
 In happy wedlock, by the knightly arm

Of thy new Arthur, sheltered safe from
harm,
By Menai's sounding shore,
Strong in Love's strength, as one who
seemed to bear
A potent talisman to shield from
ill.
But what defence averts the stroke of
care,
Or blunts the shafts of Heaven's mys-
terious will !
Grief dwelt with thee long time, but
now
The crown of Resignation decks thy
brow.

Dear Lady, we are feeble folk, and
weak,
But our old tongue and loyal hearts we
keep ;
We cherish still the love we may not
speak—
The old affection deep.
Still is our Wales "a sea of song," and
still
From smiling valley, and from soaring
hill,
Eryri's snows and fair Clwyd's verdant
plain,
Or that strange shrine upon the Western
Main,
There comes a universal voice
Of welcome to our Queen, bidding all
hearts rejoice.

VENITE PROCIDAMUS.

OUR hopes, our fears,
Our love and hate,
Our joys and tears,
Our throws with fate,

What are they all but phantoms fleeting
past,
Weak creatures of a day, which but a
day may last ?

But the great Scheme
Fares on its course
Thro' Time's long dream
Of changing force.
It saw the plesiosaur and mastodon
Wax strong, and dwindle down, and
still goes silent on.

It saw the ape
Rule every land,
The cave-man shape
Flints for his hand.
It saw a thousand generations pass
Across life's mournful stage, like visions
in a glass.

It saw the strange
Forgotten Kings,
Ages of change,
Terrible things,
It saw the Egyptian and Assyrian come,
The gay Hellenic bloom, the rugged
sway of Rome.

These too it saw
Totter and fall,
A purer law
O'er-ruling all,
And then the arrested march, the long
delay,
The baffled hope, the Dawn fading to
common day.

It makes no cry,
It lifts no voice,
Tho' all things die,
Tho' all rejoice,

It goes unceasing onward, blind and dumb,
Nor halts, nor hastes, nor heeds whatever things may come.

Eternal Scheme,
Great Lord of all,
August, Supreme,
Prostrate we fall,
We cannot know Thy working, nor its end,
Nor by what hidden paths Thy Perfect Will may tend.

But if one word
Might come, or sign,
Our souls were stirred
To growths divine,
No longer should we walk in fear and doubt,
Like children in dark ways, before the stars come out.

Ah no ! the word
The soul can hear

Is only heard
By the inner ear,
No outward light it is which can illumine
The spiritual eye, and pierce the enshrouding gloom.

An inborn light,
An inner voice,
Which burneth bright,
Which doth rejoice,
A Faith in things unseen, an inward sight
Which thro' a wrecked world sees the victory of Right.

With this our guide,
Our strength, our stay,
No more aside
Our footsteps stray.
Fulfil Thyself, Great Scheme, Eternal Plan,
Work out — we ask no word — the Destiny of Man.

A VISION OF SAINTS.

ONCE, long years since, I dreamt a dream of Greece
And fair fantastic tales of Nymph and Faun
And thin heroic forms, and ghostly gods
Floating in loveliness by grove and hill
And lake-side, all the joyous innocent grace

Of the old Pagan fancies ; mixt with tales
Of passion and unhappy deeds of old,
Dark, unforgotten.
Yesternight I knew
Another dream, a vision of old Rome,
Stern and harsher, and the new-born grace
Of sacrifice ; of life which for the Truth

Bore misery to the death, while they,
 the blithe
 Faint gods of Fancy, grew to fiends
 of Ill
 Athirst for pain and blood, and the old
 grace
 To the new suffering, and the careless
 lives
 That were content to enjoy, and asked
 no more
 Than some brief glimpse of Beauty ere
 they died,
 To grave bent brows, and tortured
 limbs, and all
 The armoury of pain.

And once again,

As the great Master passed to Paradise,
 With a celestial guide, I seemed to
 tread
 Where in the infinite Empyrean dwell
 The blessed company of Saints, and
 move,
 Conveyed by soaring wings to highest
 Heaven,
 'Midst those who bare of old the
 victor's palm
 And wore the crown—martyr and ere-
 mite,
 Lives spent in toil for God, or fired
 with love,
 An infinite concourse pure and white
 as snow ;
 While far away on that unbounded air
 Scarce reached by sight were saints of
 hoary eld,
 Who by old Nile or the Chaldæan
 plain,
 Through grave lives lighted by a certain
 hope,
 Foreknew the weighing of the soul for
 doom,
 And that unaided, darkling way which
 threads

The Valley of the Shadow, and passed
 to life
 Dim centuries, ere yet the Lawgiver
 Strode from the fiery Hill with face
 aflame,
 Down to the listening Tribes.

Not of old days

Were all the souls I saw, nor yet of
 Rome,
 In birth or faith, but down long vistas
 gray
 Of centuries we fared, by endless ranks
 Of sanctity, cloistered or secular,
 But all of Heaven ; and later born in
 time,

Preachers inspired and ministering souls
 Of women, whom no vow nor cell im-
 mured,

But a great pity drew and pious care
 For fallen lives, and those who in the
 world,

Not of it—poets, thinkers, lawgivers,
 Lovers of Country, of the Race, of
 God,

High souls and just who wrought in
 sight of all,

Toilers obscure who worked their work
 and died—

Bloom, in all time, the innumerable
 throng

That, year by year, the Eternal Seasons
 raise

To make our poor world sweet.

All these I saw,

A concourse vast of every race and
 tribe

And tongue ; till as I gazed, a shining
 band

New risen, and bearing on their front
 the mark

Of our quotidian life and modern speech,
 Streamed through the boundless vast ;
 and as we passed

Those saints long risen, or mortal
yesterday,
I questioned him who led me of the
lives
And fate of some, and he, with solemn
speech,
Made answer as we went.

But ere we came

To real lives, lived upon earth for
Heaven,
Two gracious legends, like the vanished
tales
Of older Greece, twin dreams within
my dream,
Each with its precious, hidden treasure,
took
My eyes awhile, twin truths on which
are built
Our newer, his her hopes, but of old
time
Unknown or dimly felt—the blessed
dream
Which all have dreamt and shall, of
life which ends not
With the last breath, but, to some
finer air
Escaping, doth renew itself and press
To what high work we know not, in
some sphere
Unreached by thought, yet sure; and
one the strength
Of weakness, when the too strong soul
bows low
Before God's will, and doth exalt itself
Through self-surrender. These, the
corner-stones
Of all our Faith, my guide, in parables
Part true, part feigned, declared to me,
and I
Listened with eager ears.

And first I seemed

To greet a joyous, radiant company,

Seven comely youths who, fresh from
secular sleep,
From out a caverned hillside issued
blithe
To meet the long-lost day. And thus
my guide :

“When Rome was Pagan still, a little
band
Of ardent, generous youths who called
on Christ,
Fled their idolatrous city, thinking
scorn
To kneel to those false gods their souls
abhorred—
And loathing that accursed heathen
rout
Turned to the silence of the lonely
hills
That brood round Ephesus, and found
at length
Shelter and peace, within a winding
cave
High on the rock-faced side of Cœlian,
And there dwelt safe, lifting their
gracious hymns
In worship to the Lord.

At last there came

Some heathen passer-by, who heard the
sound,
And straight betrayed them. And the
tyrant sent
His soldiers, and that none came forth
again
Rolled in the narrow entrance mon-
strous rocks,
Which shut out air and light. Then
when they knew
No change of night and day, and all
their food

Had failed, came Heaven-sent sleep to
close their eyes.

Deep sleep which knew no waking fell
on them

For the long space of nigh two hundred
years.

There they slept on till now the con-
quering Cross

Prevailed, and 'twas a Christian Cæsar
ruled

Where raged the Pagan erst. For
thirty years

The pious Theodosius swayed the might
Of Rome, and then the powers of evil
bred

Dark heresies to rend the seamless robe
The Pagan might not. Doubting voices
cried,

'No resurrection is there, but the body
Lies rotting in the earth, and the freed
soul

Weltering upon the unbounded seas of
space

Is lost within the Universe, nor more
Takes its old shape. What? did the
prophets know,

Moses, Esaias, and the rest, this thing?
There is no place of souls nor judg-
ment day

Of deeds done in the flesh, nor heaven
nor hell,

Only upon the earth our kingdom is.
Be wise and occupy, for never indeed
Comes any resurrection of the dead;
The dead are gone, cleave to the living
alone;

Use all your nature. Lives the flower
again,

The brute that comes so near us, and is
full

Of faithful love and reverence for
man

As man for God? If all these die and
pass,

Then shall not we? What else than
arrogant pride

Blinds men to fact, and fools them with
a world

No eye has seen, which all the seers of
old

Knew not nor proved? Nay, surely it
were well

To take our lives in our own hands,
and tread

Our fearless paths not looking for
reward

To any dim unreal sphere, but deem
Our individual life ends with the grave,
As ends the flower in frost; or if there
come

Something of higher life, yet 'tis the
Race

Which profits, naught beside. Where-
fore in vain

Are all your hopes of Heaven, your
fears of Hell,

Since 'tis not men who live again, but
Man.'

Thus having heard, the pious Cæsar
turned,

Struck cold with doubt, as one a palsy
takes,

Making his limbs hang impotent, his
will

Powerless to live or die. Alone he
sate,

Hating the voice, hating his doubt,
himself

Who doubted, and long time from sight
of men

Withdrew himself and, clad in sack-
cloth, pined

With ashes on his head, yet found not
peace

For all his penance, but the spectra¹
doubt
Weighed on him like a nightmare night
and day.

Now at the selfsame hour, when Cæsar
strove
With his immense despair, a humble
hind,
Seeking to find a shelter for his flock,
Chanced on the secret cave of Cœlian,
And toiling with his fellows rolled
aside
The rocks which sealed its mouth, and
went his way,
Nor entered; but when now, returning
dawn
Flooded the long-sealed vault with
cheerful day,
It pierced to where the sleepers lay,
and breathed
Some stir of coming life, and they once
more
Drinking the brisk sweet breath of
early morn
Opened their long-closed eyes, and
woke again
To the old earth, and kept the far off
past
Unchanged in memory, and spake with
mirth
Of their long sleep, and the fair dreams
it brought,
And said a prayer, and sang a hymn,
and then,
Urged by the healthy zest of vigorous
youth,
Sent one among them, Malchus hight,
to buy
Food for their hunger.

Fearfully he stole
Down the long steep to where great
Ephesus

Shining beneath him lay. Scant change
was there,
Only the stately house of Artemis
He found not where it stood. Half
dazed he seemed
By too long sleep. But when he gained
the gate
Of the city, on the walls behold the
Cross!
The witness to the faith by which he
lived,
The blessed symbol, which to own was
death!
But still he seemed to dream, and
wondering sought
Another gate, and there again the
Cross!
And as he mused what portent 'twas he
saw
The passers freely named the holy name
Which yesternight brought doom.
Then with great joy,
Yet deep perplexity, he turned to greet
Some face he seemed to know, but it
was strange,
And strange the fashion of the dress,
and strange
The accent of the tongue, till, half
afraid,
He sought where bread was bought,
and offering gold,
The seller looking saw an ancient
coin
Of Decius, and would ask him whence
it came,
Deeming he found by some unhallowed
spell
Forbidden treasure; and the youth's
strange garb
And speech, and great perplexity, en-
forced
The doubt, so that they bound him
fast and-haled him

Through the long streets, where all in
vain he sought

One friendly glance, to where upon his
throne

The Bishop judged ; and when the
aged man

Questioned him of the thing, and what
had been,

And swore him on the Cross, straight-
way the youth—

‘ We fled the tyrant Decius, who would
bid us

Serve the false gods, and—was it yes-
ternight?—

Rolled ponderous rocks to seal the cave
where I

And my companions slept ; but now, I
pray you

What is it that has been? Bear you
the Cross

And fear not? Call men now upon the
name

Of Christ and dread not all the bitter
pains—

The dungeon, and the torture, and the
stake,

The tyrannies our fathers knew and we?
What change is this assails my ears and

eyes—

Strange speech, strange vestments,
forms and faces strange?

Where is the shining house of Artemis?
I pray you tell me what it is has been,

And whether I be alive or long time
dead,

Deceived in dreams by long unnoted
years.’

Then fell the Bishop, full of pious awe,
Prostrate at Malchus’ feet—the aged
man

Before the spirit clothed with change-
less youth,

Since well he knew what thing his
eyes had seen—

A miracle of life, raised from the
grave,

A miracle of Heaven. And all the
throng,

Bishop and governor, with all the great
And noble of the city, white-haired
lords,

And stately matrons, coming, knelt
with him

Before the youth, o’er whose unwrinkled
brow

Two hundred years had passed and
left no sign—

Swift-coming age before eternal youth,
Brief life before the endless life of dea’h.

Then went they forth, that noble
throng, and all

The city, to where upon the Cœlian
hill

The seven youthful martyrs lay so
long.

There in the cave, the blessed company
Sate cheerful, wondering much to see
the throng,

With Malchus leading them ; and as
the array

Drew nearer, heard the sound of hymns,
and saw

The sacred symbol borne on high, and
knew

All that had been, and that the might
of Wrong

Was broken, and the world was of the
Faith,

And the false gods no more ; and then
they raised

Their clear accordant strains in praise
to heaven,

And from their happy heads crowned
round with light,

And from their cheeks red with the
 heavenly rose,
 And from their lips touched with
 divinest song,
 An effluent glory shone, and all who
 saw
 Knew that their eyes beheld the
 blessed dead.

 Last, Theodosius wrestling with his
 doubt,
 And almost conquering, sped o'er land
 and sea
 To see the portent, and when he was
 come
 And stood before the place the Pagan
 erst
 Sealed fast with monstrous rocks, on
 the young lives
 Fresh vowed to Christ, and left them
 there to die,
 He knelt in silence, and the fire of
 faith
 Burned high in him, and dried the
 deeps of doubt.
 And when he looked on those immortal
 eyes,
 And that first bloom of an immortal
 youth,
 His faith grew perfect, and he blest
 the Lord
 Who sent the sign. Then, with one
 voice sublime,
 The seven awakened spirits sang,
 ' Believe,
 Believe through us, O Cæsar ! We
 are dead,
 And yet we live. Praise Heaven that
 we have seen
 The faith triumphant. Ere the last
 great day
 The Lord has raised us that men
 should be strong,

And doubt no longer, but believe
 indeed
 The life and resurrection of the world.'

And when their voices died away they
 bowed
 Their heads upon their breasts, and
 kneeling, gave
 Their spirits back to God ; and all
 who saw,
 And all who heard, Cæsar, and all the
 throng,
 Doubted no more, but rose and did
 believe."

Which things, when I had heard, again
 I seemed
 To hear my guide, " Know, thou that
 hearest me,
 Through the round world this fair old-
 legend runs
 Where man is higher than the beasts
 that die.
 The Hindu, dreaming on his seething
 plains,
 Cherishes it ; the fierce false prophet
 stole
 The story ; and throughout the fabulous
 East
 It lives and thrives to-day ; the frozen
 North
 Holds it for true ; o'er all the ancient
 world
 Some fair faint blossom of the gracious
 tale
 Lingers, and in the modern springs
 anew
 In witness to the light-winged hours
 which snatch
 The swift unconscious life from youth
 to age.

Too fair, too fleeting, change confusing
change—

Change of a day which works the
work of years ;

Unchanging years, which seem but as
a day !”

“But with still clearer voice, and
sweeter tongue,

Thus speaks the legend : ‘Sleep and
Death are one,

Not diverse, and to Death’s long
slumber comes

Awakening sure and certain, when the
Dawn

Of the Last Day shall break, and shall
unseal

The long-closed eyes, as that strong
sun of Spring

Illumed the caves of sleep, and stirred
the blood

Which else had slumbered still.’ Yet
since no sign

Comes from our sleepers here, the
yearning hearts

Which mark the struggling breath
come short and faint,

The tired eyes close, and the calm
peace which smooths

The weary brow—and feel ’tis sleep—
no more—

Yet find no proof, cherish the legend fair,
Because life longs to be, because to
cease

Is terrible, because the listening soul
Waits for some whisper from beyond
the grave,

Waits still, as it has waited through all
time,

Waits undismayed, whate’er its form
of creed,

Nor fails, though all is silence, to hold
fast,

Deep in its sacred depths, too deep for
thought,

The Resurrection and the Life to be.”

Next ’twas a tall and stalwart form I
saw,

Like Herakles of old, who strode
along,

Bearing a staff which seemed to bud
and bloom

Into the martyr’s flower. Fainter he
showed

In outline than the rest, as if I saw
A veiled life half hid behind a cloud

Of legend, or a real life, perchance,
Set round with precious gems of alle-

gory

And consecration fashioned from the
sum

Of meaner lives, less sinful, less cast
down,

And less triumphant. Was it parable,
Not fact, that bade him be? Then it
was well

To feign the tale—the wave of death,
the power

Of evil, the strong man who turned to
good,

Whose fleshly strength was broken by
the weight

Of a little child—and this dim saint,
the thrall

Of evil once, is precious, as the lives
We track from birth to death.

Thus then my guide
Held converse as we passed.

“No name there is
More strange and quaint and sweet
than Christopher’s,
Who bore the Christ.

In the far fabulous East
 He served, a soldier. Nature, which
 so oft
 Grudges her gifts, gave this man
 stalwart limbs
 And giant strength, joined with the
 choicer gift
 Of a keen brain, and daring will, and
 high
 Ambition which aspires. Him the
 blithe voice
 Of swift adventure called o'er land
 and sea,
 The magical music, heard of nobler
 souls,
 Which dulls all lower voices. More
 than Prince
 This doughty champion showed, a
 King of men,
 Who saw Power shining starlike on
 the hills
 And set his face to reach it. Luxury
 Held him nor sensual ease, who was
 too great
 For silken fetters ; a strong will and
 arm
 Bent to a higher end than those, and
 fired
 By higher longings.

Every soul of man
 Knows its own weakness, so this
 strength o'ergrown
 Only achievement drew. O'er land
 and sea,
 From realm to realm, he went, seeking
 a Lord
 Still mightier than the last, until at
 length
 A slumbering soul, not prizing good
 or ill,
 He found a puissant Prince and served
 content.

But 'mid the rugged ways of this sad
 world,
 As now he fared unmoved, the frequent
 sight
 Of evil ; the blind rage which takes
 and sways
 The warrior in the fight ; the hopeless
 pain
 Which unregarded cries to Heaven ;
 the wrong
 Done on the earth for ever ; the great
 sum
 And mystery of Evil, worked on him
 With that strange spell of power which
 only takes
 The strong soul captive. Here was
 strength indeed,
 Greater than mortal, which had power
 to bind
 The mightiest in chains, now forcing
 them
 Despite themselves to wrong, now
 binding them
 With sensual fetters. Was not this
 enough
 To limit Heaven itself? So this rude
 soul
 Bowed to it, taking Evil for his god,
 A voluntary thrall. Yet not to him
 The smooth foul ways of sense, the
 paths of wrong,
 Brought pleasure of themselves ; only
 a beat
 Of pulsing life, the keenness and the
 glow
 Of full impassioned being. So long
 time
 He served the Lord of Evil ; deeds of
 wrong
 And anger knew he, stains of sensual
 sin ;
 So that, for dread of him, men named
 his name

'The Unrighteous,' but he recked not.
 Power and fame
 Sufficed him long, and hid from him
 the fashion
 Of his own life, and by what perilous
 ways
 He went, and black unfathomed gulfs
 of Ill.

Till one day, as he journeyed (so the
 tale,
 The allegory of this sinful soul)
 Through a thick wood, which was the
 deadly shade
 Of sense, and of the world, which hid
 the heavens,
 Blinding the eye of day ; with wonder-
 ing thought
 He knew his vanquisher, the Lord of
 Ill,
 Cower down as from a blow, hiding
 his eyes
 From some white suffering form.

And lo ! his gaze
 Met that great symbol of all sacrifice
 Which men have worshipped since ;
 the soft sad eyes,
 The painful limbs fixed to the Tree
 of Death
 Which is the Tree of Life ; and all the
 past
 Fell from him, and the mystery of Love
 And Death and Evil ; Might which
 gives itself
 To save the Race, and dying, breaks
 in twain
 The vanquished strength of Hell ; all
 these transformed
 His inmost being, and his prisoned
 soul,
 Spurning its former chain, stood fair
 and free,
 Unfettered, for a while, and then he fell

Prone on the earth, the mild and pity-
 ing eyes
 Bent on him still. There he lay
 motionless
 A night of precious sorrow, till at last
 The sun rose on the earth and on his
 soul,
 And Dawn, returning, brought the
 purer Day.

But when he rose, the ancient mastery
 And thirst for power, springing anew
 in him
 Once more resistless, over land and sea
 Drove him to seek this new and
 mightier Lord
 Who brake the power of Ill. So far
 and wide
 He fared, a passionate Pilgrim, but
 found not
 The Lord Divine—for Him indeed his
 eyes
 Saw not as yet—filled with the pride of
 life,
 Touched with desire for good, since it
 was strong,
 But prizing strength alone.

Till as he went
 His footsteps chanced upon a stony
 land
 Where sprang no herb. There, in a
 lonely cell,
 Pondered an aged man ; no other thing
 Of life was there, only wan age, which
 paused
 Upon the verge of death. His giant
 strength
 Was flagging now. Beyond the ghostly
 hills
 The sun was sinking, and the gray of
 night
 Stole upward. Through the plain
 beneath the cell

Went down into the waters. Piteous
cries

Called loud to him for help, poor way-
farers

Come to life's goal; wan age and
budding youth,

And childhood fallen untimely. He
stooped down

With wonder mixed with pity, solacing
Those weakling limbs, and, bearing in
his arms

The helpless burden, through the chill
dark depths

Of those black swirling waters, undis-
mayed,

Strode onward. Oftentimes the deadly
chill

Of ice-cold floods too strong for feeble
hearts

Assailed him, yet his giant stature
still

Strode upright through the deep to the
far shore.

And those poor pilgrims with reviving
souls

Blessed him, and left the waters, and
grew white

And glorified, and in their eyes he
knew

A wonder and a rapture as they saw
The palace of the King, the domes, the
spires,

The shining oriels sunlit into gold,
The white forms on the verge to wel-
come them,

And the clear heights, and the dis-
covered heaven.

But never on his eyes, for all his toil,
Broke that clear sun, nor those fair
palace roofs,

As erst upon his weakness. Day and
night

He laboured unrewarded, and no gleam

Of that eternal glory, which would
shine

Upon those fainting souls, whom his
strong arms

Bare upward. Day and night he toiled
alone

Amid the deeps of death. Oft would
he rise

At midnight, when the cry of sinking
lives

Called to him on the brink, and succour
them

Without a thought of fear. Yea, though
the floods

Roared horribly, and deep called unto
deep,

Straight through those hidden depths
he strode unmoved

A strong, laborious, unrewarded soul.

Was it because the blot of former sin
Clung to him still uncleansed? I can-
not tell;

The stain of ill eats deep. But to my
thought

Not thus the legend runs; rather, I
deem

He loved in good the strength which
erst enthralled

His life to ill. Therefore this striving
soul

Still laboured unfulfilled.

Thus the slow years
Passed, till the giant strength at times
would flag

A little, and yet bore on. But one still
night,

Ere cockcrow, when the world was sunk
in sleep,

A summons came; and he arising saw,
With some strange new compassion, on
the brink

A childish form. A sweet sad glance
divine

Shone from the eyes. And as the strong
man took
The weakling to his heart, through the
great power
Of Pity with new strength, he braved
the deep
Careless with that light load.

But in mid stream
The more than human force, the daunt-
less spirit
Which long time bore unfalt'ring the
great load
Of mortal ills—ay, though the loud
winds beat

And the thick night was blind—these
failed him now,

And, as by some o'erwhelming weight
opprest,

His flagging forces tottered; the cold
wave

Rose high around him; the once
haughty head

Bowed low, the waters stealing to his
lip

Engulfed; the burden of the painful
world

Crushed his weak shoulders; and a
bitter cry

Burst from him—'Help! I faint, I
sink, I die,

I perish; I am spent, and can no more.
My strength is naught, the deep floods
swallow me.

Not of myself I conquered, but of Thee.'

Then suddenly from his spent life he
knew

The load withdrawn, and through the
midnight gloom

There burst the glorious vision of his
dreams,

The palace of the King, the domes, the
spires,

The shining oriels sunlit into gold,
The heaven of heavens discovered, and
a voice—

'Thou hast sustained the whole world,
bearing Me

The Lord of Earth and Heaven. Rise;
turn awhile

To the old shore of Time. I am the
King

Thou seekest. I have known thy sin,
thy pain,

Thy tears, thy penitence. If thy soul
ask

Proof of these things, this sign I give
to thee.

Set thou thy staff to-night upon the
verge

Of these dark waters, and with break
of dawn

Seek it, and thou shalt find it burgeon
forth

With fair white scented blossoms. This
shall be

Witness of what has been.'

And he with joy,
Vanquished at length, obeyed, and
with the dawn

Where stood his staff, there sprang the
perfumed cup

And petals of a lily: so the tale.

Nay, but it was the rude strength of
his life

Which blossomed into purity, and
sprang

Into a higher self, beneath the gaze

Of a little child.—Nay, but it was the
might

Of conscious strength, which cast its
robes of price

Down on the earth; the new self
stripped and purged

Of ingrained pride, which from the
deeps of death

Rose painful to the stable earth again,
And grew regenerate through humility.

So for the remnant of his days he
served

The Lord of Good, a champion of the
Right,

Grown meek. At last the Pagan
governor

Bade him deny the Lord who succoured
him ;

Whom he contemning, gained a martyr's
crown

Through pain and death, and is Saint
Christopher."

He ended, and I mused in silent
thought

On this quaint legend, when again my
guide—

"Even so they toil as he, the striving
souls

Who live on earth to-day engrossed
with care

Willing to better our poor world, which
calls

Always with piteous suffrages to
Heaven—

Strong souls with deep compassion for
the race,

Seeming possess, yet vainly, since their
labour

Born of the half unconscious pride of
strength

Is only part for others, or for God.

But when a nobler, self-less passion fills
The heart and soul, then only fit reward

Is theirs, and from the depths of their
dead selves,

And from the staff of their discarded
strength,

And from the unneeded treasures of
their past,

The yearning to fulfil the Perfect
Scheme,

The full surrender to the Heavenly
Will,

Obedience, self-effacement, sacrifice,

Life a white perfumed blossom springs
to Heaven."

And as we left the haunted border-land
Of fantasy, for lives, which lived and
died

In the long-vanished centuries, true
indeed

Though broided here and there with
flowers of gold

By pious hands devouter than our own,
Yet mainly true ; first of the endless
line

I saw a calm and Princely Presence
come,

Who, stately as the Imperial Purple,
bore

His robe, a saint in mien, mild,
innocent,

Perfect in manhood, with clear eye
serene,

And lofty port ; who from the sages
took

What lessons earth could give, but trod
no less

The toilsome path of Duty to the
end ;

And as he passed I knew the Kingly
ghost

Of Antonine, who knew not Christ
indeed

Yet not the less was His. I marked
the calm

And thoughtful face of him who ruled
himself,

And through himself the world, and
 'mid the soil
 And foulness of unfettered lusts kept
 pure
 His virgin soul, and o'er the servile
 crowd,
 Trembling, betrayed, beneath the armèd
 heels
 Of a long line of tyrants trodden in
 blood,
 Wielding a blameless sceptre, stayed
 awhile
 By a white life, and perfect, lived for
 Good
 The hurrying doom and ruin of the
 world.

Whom when we passed, thus spake my
 heavenly guide :

" There are of Him, who call not on
 His name,

And this is of them, the best flower
 and fruit

Of all the Heathen world, the Sage
 who ruled

The race of men, for whom the fatal
 gift

Of power unfettered worked nor hurt
 nor harm,

But left his soul unchanged : for whom
 the gross

And sensual lusts which wrecked the
 hapless line

Of Cæsars were as naught, the coward
 fears

Of tyranny unknown, the secret arts
 Of the informer hateful ; since he
 lived

The foremost citizen of Rome—no more
 Nor lower, happy, loving wife and child
 And all his people as a father might
 The offspring of his love. Then first
 indeed

Crowned, on a throne, Divine
 Philosophy

Swayed all the race of men, like that
 fair dream

Of the Athenian sage, and too great weal
 Lulled them to sleep, till they forgot to
 prize

Their freedom lost for ever. All his
 soul

Was filled with love of peace, holding
 it more

To save a single citizen than slay

A thousand enemies. A thrifty mind
 Grudging his people's toil, not less he
 planned

Great works and beautiful, which might
 enrich

The City of the world, and, loving
 peace,

Yet not the less the reverence for his
 name

Spread to earth's limits. On the dis-
 tant bank

Of Phasis, to a king whom Cæsar
 named,

The stubborn tribesmen bowed. The
 Parthian spared

Armenia at his nod. The Scythian
 hosts

On the Cimmerian shore confessed his
 might,

And on the wild Sarmatian plains his
 word

Was law, and many a barbarous chief-
 tain came

To kneel his vassal, whom with sooth-
 ing words

He would dismiss, deeming his load of
 rule

Sufficient without more. For that great
 gift

Of Rome to men, just laws and wise,
 his thought

Devised new gains, filled with the
purest love
Of Heaven-sent equity ; and that rare
flower
Of tolerance which best of all adorns
The philosophic brow ; which those who
call
On a Diviner name learn last of all ;
Which wise Aurelius knew not, nor the
books
Of all the sages taught ; in this pure
heart
Sprang up self-sown, and bloomed in
noble deeds,
From sceptic Greek and unbelieving
Jew,
Shielding the faith of Christ, not care-
lessly,
With that contemptuous charity the
fruit
Of cold and doubtful minds, but born
of trust
In the old faith, and therefore generous.

Dost wonder that against so white a soul,
So pure, so innocent, so rich in love,
There burned the causeless enmity that
fires
The traitor's base ambition ? Two there
were ;
But one the Senate doomed, the other
fell
By his own hand. But when they told
the saint,
Seeking to unmask some deep con-
spiracy,
He would not. 'Sure,' he said, 'twere
little gain
To learn that of the people of my love
So many hate me.' Ah, fair words and
high
Of one who spotless filled the blood-
stained throne

Round which for two long centuries had
twined
Rank growths of vile mistrust and hate
and blood !

Thus through his long and peaceful
years the saint
Lived cheerful. All good things were
his to hold,
And hardly clouded days, because his
soul
Took willingly his lot. And yet he lost
His well-loved sons before their budding
age
Had come to flower. And yet 'twas his
to bear
The curse of a vile woman ; but his
faith,
Greater than her offence, forbade him
still
To hold her false ; too pure, too meek
a soul
To mate with such, or haply half aware
And yet forgiving all, like Him who
bade
The sinner sin no more. Still on his
life
The Sun of Righteousness shone clear
and lit
His way with gleams of Heaven, and all
his days
Were gilded, year by year, until the
end,
As his who treads the duteous paths of
life
And is content.

Then, when he came to die,
Commending, with calm love, his only
child
And, most of all, the Empire which he
loved
To him who followed him, the sage his
hand

Had trained in his own virtues, tranquilly
 He laid him on his bed ; and when the end
 Drew near, the watchers heard the failing voice
 Wander in dreams, and whisper of the State
 And all his hopes for her. And when he woke,
 Laying all signs of sovereignty aside,
 He bade them take the golden Victory,
 The solemn symbol of Imperial power,
 And bear it to Aurelius. Last, when now
 Life's tide was ebbing fast, he summoned to him
 The tribune of the guard, and uttered clear,
 As should an Emperor who led his hosts
 To battle with the evil of the world,
 The password of the day—one word,
 no more,
 Calm and Imperial—'Æquanimitas.' ”

And something in me seemed to rise and break
 In utterance, and as we passed I cried,
 “ This man was of Thy name, O Lord,
 and Thou,
 Among the ranks of those who lived ere yet
 Thou camest, or called not on Thee,
 having come,
 Didst never leave Thyself, or then or since,
 Wholly without a witness, but didst set
 Thy light for all to see, these precious blooms
 Of purity, these priceless lives unstained

And spent for Duty, 'mid the strifes,
 the lusts
 Of a polluted world.”

And then I saw
 Two girlish mothers, bearing each a child
 Clasped to her breast, one with the conscious pride
 Of noble birth, and one a lowlier form,
 Who to the other looked with loving eyes
 In which the old respect was mingled now
 With a new sense of equal sisterhood ;
 And both with rapt gaze went, as keeping still
 Some memory of surprise, since first they rose
 From earth to heaven ; and my guide named their names
 Discoursing thus :

“ By the Tyrrhenian Sea
 In Africa, when nigh two hundred years
 Passed since Christ died, there lived a youthful wife,
 Bearing her first-born infant at her breast,
 Perpetua, of noble lineage, nursed
 Safe in the shelter of her happy home
 From maidenhood to gracious motherhood ;
 Nor broke there on her tranquil hours a sound
 Of the great suffering of the painful world,
 But evermore in gracious liturgies
 Of homely life she spent her careless days,
 Shielded from every breath of ruder air

Which might assault her, fenced about
secure

By walls of love ; sire, mother, brother,
spouse,

Linking close arms around her, and her
birth

And name, and rank and wealth, and
honour of men

Made this rude path of life and rugged
steep

Show, like the fields of June, a maze of
flowers.

Now on those calm and slumbering
days there burst

The New Faith like a flame, and the
quick soul

Of the young wife was fired, and she
became

A catechumen and embraced the truth,
Scorning the Pagan gods ; and her
young brother,

Like her, believed, and so in piety
They lived, till came an overwhelming
wave

Of bloodshed once again, and they
denounced

The faithful pair, and first Perpetua.

But when this great blow fell on him,
her sire,

A noble, holding fast the faith of old
And loving with a father's love his
girl

And her young child, ere yet the shadow
of doom

Fell on them, went to her, and of his
love

Would seek to bend her, using all the
strength

Which venerable age and filial awe
Might give him ; bade her pause awhile
and seek

Counsel of wiser heads than hers, who
knew

The riddles of the Faith, and what deep
truths,

Though hid by myth, maybe, and
parable,

The Pagan forms concealed. But she,
with clear

Undoubting faith : ' My father, canst
thou change

The fashion of a vessel, giving it
Another name ? ' And he : ' Nay,
'twere the same

Howe'er men called it.' Then she
answered straight,

With fearless voice, ' Nor canst thou
change my soul,

Which bears the name of Christ.' Then
with deep grief

The old man raised his hand as if to
strike,

But could not, seeing her undaunted
soul,

And went his way, nor troubled her ;
and she,

In that short time of rest, cleansing her
soul

With the baptismal waters, rose re-
freshed,

A Christian, strong to suffer and give
praise.

Then in a few brief days began the tale
Of Martyrdom. 'Tis her own voice
that speaks

The story of her suffering. ' In the
gloom

Of a dark prison cell, where stifling heat
And the rude insults of the brutal guard
Tortured each sense, I lay in misery.

There my young bondswoman Felicitas,
Wanting a month to labour, took with
me

The sacred lustral waters, and we sate
 Pining amid the squalor of the jail,
 Until at last, their hard hearts moved
 by Heaven,
 They brought my darling to me, and I
 gave him
 Milk from my breast, and thenceforth
 day and night
 I lived content, my child within my
 arms ;
 And those dull prison walls seemed
 more to me
 Than my sire's palace, since I held my
 love
 And kept my faith unchanged, and
 grew to be
 Happier, than ever in that careless life
 Within my palace home.

 And then one day
 My brother, who was partner in my
 bonds,
 Seeing my cheerful and undaunted soul,
 Spake thus to me : " Sister, I do per-
 ceive
 Thou art Heaven's favourite ; therefore
 to thy prayer
 Doubtless the Lord will grant a blessed
 dream,
 Sent through the watches of the night,
 if thou
 Wilt kneel to ask it, and we too shall
 know
 Whether the martyr's crown is ours to
 wear
 Or shameful freedom." Then I prayed,
 and, lo !
 In the still watches of the night, a dream
 Which showed a golden stairway to the
 skies.
 Around it swords and hooks and all the
 array
 Of martyrdom were ranged, and at its
 foot

A loathly monster, crouching, coil on
 coil,
 To take the souls of those who fain
 would rise.
 And when, with fear and trembling, I
 had passed,
 Naming the sacred Name, to some blest
 place,
 A garden, I ascended ; there I saw
 A shepherd with his flock around him
 ranged
 By myriads on the grass, who welcomed
 me
 And gave me of some mystic food,
 which I
 Received with folded hands and took
 and ate.
 And all the throng of saints, with one
 accord,
 Pealed forth " Amen ; " and sudden I
 awoke,
 Hearing their voices, and upon my
 lips
 Lingered the sweetness of that heavenly
 food.
 And when I told my brother of my
 dream,
 We knew our hour was come, our fate
 assured,
 And we with nothing more of fear nor
 hope.

Then after many days my father came,
 Borne down with grief. " Daughter,"
 he cried, " I pray thee,
 Pity these scant gray hairs. If e'er thy
 sire
 Loved thee beyond thy brethren,
 cherished thee
 Through all thy childhood, watched
 thee till thou camest
 To honourable wedlock, now, I pray
 thee,

Have pity on him ; make him not the
 shame
 Of all mankind. Or if indeed I fail,
 With all my love, to bend thee, pity
 her,
 Thy mother, who has borne thee, and
 who yearns
 To clasp her child again. If none of
 these
 Move thee, have pity on thy child, who
 pines
 Without thee, nor can live without thy
 breast.
 Nay, daughter, have compassion ! See,
 thy father
 Kneels to thee, lady, and in tears, and
 is
 Thy suppliant for thyself !” But I,
 who knew
 How wise he was and tender, felt my
 soul
 Pierced through with sorrow. Yet the
 Faith ! the Faith !
 Should I betray it ? “Nay,” I said,
 “my father ;
 We all are in God’s hand, who rules all
 things
 Even as He will.”

Then sorrowful he went.

Now, when the day was come when we
 should stand
 For trial of the Judge Hilarion,
 Even as we stood before him, set on
 high
 For all to see, when my turn came to
 plead,
 Confessing Christ, I heard a cry, and
 lo !
 My father with my infant in his arms,
 Conjuring me with tender words of love
 To spare him and my child, whom I
 had given

Life, and now doomed to death, re-
 counting all
 The misery I should bring. And my
 sweet turned
 His darling eyes on me, and smiled and
 stretched
 His little hands to me, and seemed to
 seek
 His mother’s breast. And the stern
 judge himself
 Besought me to have mercy and to
 spare
 My father and my child, and bade me
 burn
 A little incense to the gods. But I,
 Some new strength firing me, which
 swept away
 The love of sire or child, made answer
 straight,
 “I will not,” and confessed I was of
 Christ.
 And when my father strove to force me
 down
 And hush my voice, the stern Hilarion
 Gave word that they should scourge
 him ; and I heard
 The sound of blows, and felt my father’s
 pain
 Quiver through every nerve, and grew
 so faint
 That he should suffer thus, and all for
 me,
 Amid his honoured age, that scarce I
 marked
 That cold voice dealing doom, the
 dreadful death
 Of those the fierce brutes’ tooth or claw
 or horn
 Rends limb from limb.

And then they scourged with thongs
 Our brother martyrs, while ourselves
 indeed,
 Me and my bondswoman Felicitas

They buffeted with blows upon the
face.

But many visions, through the grace of
Heaven,

Came to me ere the end, and on the
eve

Of the great shows, when all day long
my limbs,

Racked in the cruel stocks, scarce
ceased to pain,

Amid the troubled thoughts of coming
doom,

The hushed arena framed with cruel
faces

Ready to gloat on death, the sudden
roar

As from the darkling dens the famished
beast

Leapt forth in fury, and the echoing
cries

From the base coward throng reclining
safe

To see their fellows bleed, there came
a dream

Heaven-sent. For, lo! without the
dungeon door

One seemed to knock; and when I
opened to him,

The martyred saint, Pomponius, stood
without,

Clad in white shining garments, all
besprent

With pomegranates of gold. These
words he spake:

"Perpetua, we await thee." And I
followed,

And through dark ways he led me, till
we came

Forth 'mid the still arena's sudden
blaze.

And then he left me, and they bade me
fight

No tiger, but some loathly shape of
man,

Who held a bough laden with golden
fruit

For prize of victory. Then we strove
long

Together; but I conquered, and I
gained

The precious fruit, and suddenly I
knew

That not with ravening tooth or rend-
ing claw

Alone 'twas mine to fight, but with the
force

Of Evil, human-shaped, Evil without,
Evil within, if one would keep the
Faith.'

Dear soul, so far she speaks, the rest
for her

Is silence, but a witness speaks who
saw

What things were done. When their
last day was come,

On that accursèd Pagan holiday,
The people heard, thrilled with a
shameful joy,

The roarings of the famished brutes
beneath.

And they, too, heard it, and the gather-
ing roar

Of the more brutal crowd; sitting
alone

In silence and in darkness, till the
hour

When they, weak nursing mothers,
faithful youths,

Noble and slave, alike went forth to
face

The oft imagined dread, the tooth, the
claw,

The piercing horn, the spring, the
devilish strength,

The same Hand fashioned which could
frame the lamb.

Sure, 'twere no wonder if those delicate
lives,

Forlorn of help, scorned, tortured, of
their God

Forsaken, as their Master, had shrunk
back

From that intolerable fear ; but they
Shrank not at all, strong souls, but
dauntless went,

Leaving their new-born joys, and the
young lips

Of children at the breast, home, love,
young life,

And all for Christ, fronting the horrible
dread

Unmoved, unfearing—went without a
word

Through hollow stifling dungeons, lost
in gloom,

To where, on a sudden, blazed the
noonday glare

Above the arena, and the solitude
Horrid with pitiless eyes, and the loud
roar

Of the imprisoned beasts behind the bars,
That presently the cruel spite of men
Should loose on them.

And there they stood and sang
A hymn 'midst jeering thousands. On
the youth

Who suffered first, a leopard, springing,
bathed

His poor frame in a baptism of blood ;
And when, oh, shame ! they stripped
those wifely limbs

Before the ribald gaze of countless
eyes—

They had not looked for that—a deadly
chill

Took them, and what the terror of the
beasts,

The lions' dreadful roaring, the fierce
growl

Of the impatient tigers, the red jaws
Of the tall bears who shook their bars,
the low

Fierce muttering of the bulls, whose
lurid eyes

Glared on them, could not, wifely
modesty

Had well-nigh done, when some new
Heaven-sent shame

Touched the vile throng, who bade the
jailers hide

Their nakedness ; and there, in robes
of white,

Naming the holy Name, they stood and
took

The mad brutes' horrible rage, and,
pierced and tost

By the sharp horn, and hurled in air,
and trod

By the fierce rushing feet, they lay alone,
Bleeding upon the sand, swooning away,
Or by some heavenly ecstasy possessed
Which dulled their pain.

But when Perpetua
Knew life return, she her dishevelled
hair

Tied in a knot, and round her wounded
limbs

Gathered her robe, and seeing on the
ground

The young Felicitas, assuaged her pain
And lifted her, waiting again the rush
Of the fierce beast ; but when he came
no more,

The sordid crowd, still hungering for
blood,

Demanded they should die before their
eyes.

Then, in their midst, the dauntless
martyr band

Stepped forth and gave the sacred kiss
 of peace,
 And met swift death ; but she, Perpetua,
 From some unskilful hand or timorous,
 took
 Repeated blows, and languished long,
 and bore
 Wound upon cruel wound ere her pure
 spirit
 Was freed and rose, and rested with
 the blest."

—————

And straight my heart, hearing this
 piteous tale,
 Was melted in me, and I seemed to cry,
 'These are Thy saints, O Lord, like
 those whose bones

Lie scattered in Thy Alpine valleys cold,
 Or who to-day by Thy idolatrous East,
 Or Thy old Nile, or on the desert sands,
 Or gemlike islets of the tropic sea,
 Have died without a murmur for Thy
 sake.

Thou askest of Thy creatures sacrifice,
 And it is given, nor yet with readier soul
 In the first ages of the Faith than now.
 Haply with blinder courage 'twas they
 went,

These protomartyrs, to their doom,
 than those

Who die to-day. With what high flame
 of faith

These souls were set on fire, who met
 unmoved—

Delicate lives lapt round with luxury—
 The scorn of men, the jeering careless
 crowd,

The tortures of the fiends, rather than
 pay

False homage to false gods ! And yet,
 indeed,

I know not if there be not sacrifice
 As willing now ; the Indian well to-day
 Is choked with women's corpses, who
 had bought

Ease, wealth, and life, nay, more—the
 dearer lives

Of children—had they borne to bend
 the knee

To the false Prophet. Nay, Thy hand,
 O Lord,

Is strong as it was then, Thy seeming
 face

Averted as 'twas then, till the last
 breath

Sobs from the painful lips, and Thou
 dost bid them

Enter into Thy joy. Thou seest all
 And speakest not, but these Thy
 servants hear

Some still small whisper which the
 duller sense

Of the world may not take. But whoso
 hears

Thy voice, for him the aspect of
 things seen

And felt—the world without, the world
 within—

The old familiar landmarks of his life,
 The heavens, the earth, the sea, no
 longer show

As undetermined fantasies ; but all
 The smiling summer plains, the storm-
 wrapt hills,

The clear cold dawn, the angry furious
 night,

Lives bright as Heaven, lives dark as
 nether Hell,

Joy, grief, pain, pleasure, mingle and
 are part

Of the unfolding mystery of Faith ! "

Then, as we passed, we came on one
whose face

The whole world knows—so fine a soul
and hand

Saw her long since, and fixed her for
our eyes—

A maiden with rapt gaze, and at her
side

An idle music ; listening half entranced
To some celestial harmonies unheard
Save by pure souls like hers. There
was no need

To name her name, when thus the tale
began :

“Once in old Rome, long centuries ago,
There lived a pair, noble in rank and
soul,

Who, though the Pagan idols still bare
sway,

Knel't not to them, holding the faith of
Christ.

And one fair girl was theirs, Cecilia,
Nourished on thoughts of virgin purity
Which filled her cloistered gaze. No
earthly love

Might touch her pure pale soul, which
always viewed,

Lit only by the frosty moon of faith,
The cold clear peaks of soaring duty
pierce

The still blue vault of heaven, as soar
the snows

Of lifeless Alp on Alp, where comes
no herb

Nor blade of green, but all the icy
world

Dreams wrapt in robes of sterile purity.

For evermore to her rapt eyes the skies
Stood open, evermore to her rapt ear
Celestial music came, and strains
unheard

By mortal ear amid the throng of life
Hushed all the lower tones and noise
of earth

With heavenly harmonies ; and the
high notes

Of the invisible chanting seraphim
Would occupy her life, until her soul,
Rapt by the ravishing sound, would
seem to 'scape

From her raised eyes, and float, and
speed itself

Between the rhythmic wings of harmony,
Even to Heaven's gate, and was trans-
formed and lost

Its earthly taint ; and sometimes on
her lips

Thin traces of the heavenly music
dwelt,

Which bound the listener fast, and of
her skill

Some half-remembered echoes, faint
yet sweet,

Were born again on lute or pipe, and
linked

The world with Heaven ; the immortal
chanting quires

With earth's poor song ; the anthems
of the blest

With our weak halting voices, till the
being

Of that fair virginal interpreter,
Pierced with keen melodies, and folded
round

With golden links of gracious har-
monies,

Was all possest of Heaven, and to her
thought

It seemed a guardian angel stood by
her

In sleep or waking hours, so that no
care

For earth or earthly love might press
on her.

Such sweetness touc'ed her voice ; the
 starry quires
 Would hearken pleased, and voices
 not of earth
 Mingled with hers harmonious, and
 she drew
 From voice and hand such descants as
 the skies
 Themselves had envied, as with pipe
 on pipe
 Conjoined with wedded notes and
 varying tones
 She made high music to our Lord in
 heaven.

Now, when this maiden lost in dream-
 ing thought
 Was of full age, her father bade her
 wed
 A noble Roman youth, Valerian,
 A Pagan yet ; but she, whose filial love
 Constrained her to obey, beneath her
 robes
 Of marriage hid a robe of penance
 still,
 And to her husband, whom indeed she
 loved
 With wifely love, confessed her mystic
 tale—
 How night and day, whether she slept
 or woke,
 A ghostly presence, standing at her
 side,
 Kept watch and ward, nor left her.
 And when he
 Asked sight of him, and proof, she
 bade him seek
 The saintly Urban in the Catacombs,
 Where he lay hid, and he consenting
 went,
 And rose converted from his old unfaith
 And was baptized ; and when, a
 Christian now,

He sought his home again, he heard
 within
 Enchanting music strange, and strains
 divine ;
 And long time listening rapt, at last
 he came
 To his wife's chamber, and beheld,
 indeed,
 His eyes being ope ed by his faith, a
 form
 Celestial standing by her, with a crown
 Of roses in each hand, in scent and hue
 Immortal, and the Angel as they knelt
 Crowned each with them—the crown
 of martyrdom.

And then, because the Lord Valerian
 Obeyed so well, the Angel bade him ask
 What boon he would. And he : ' My
 lord, I have
 A brother of my love, Tiburtius ;
 Let him believe.' And he made
 answer to him,
 ' So shall it be, and ye shall both attain
 The martyr's crown.' And then he
 passed away.
 And presently Tiburtius, entering,
 Though yet he might not see the roses,
 knew
 Their fresh immortal sweetness flood
 the air
 With fragrance, and he heard the
 gracious words
 Cecilia spake, and all her proofs
 inspired
 Of Heaven and of the truth, and so
 his heart
 Was touched and he baptized and held
 the Faith.

But when the Pagan Lord, Almachius,
 Who governed, heard these things, he
 bade them cease

To call on Christ, and when they
would not, sent them
To prison dungeons foul, and thence
to death.

Last, when the brothers died, his
pitiless rage
Summoned Cecilia. Her, with threats
of pain

And horrible death, he bade do sacrifice
To the false gods. She, with a smile
of scorn,

Denied him; and the people round
who heard

Her constancy, wept for the fate they
knew

Waited the fair girl-wife, and, bathed
in tears,

Confessed themselves to be like her,
of Christ,

Till the fierce prefect, mingling rage
with fear,

Spake thus: 'What art thou, woman,
who dost dare

Defy the gods?' And she, with lofty
scorn:

'I am a Roman noble.' Then said he,
'I ask thee of thy faith?' And she:
'Oh, blind!

See these whom my example drew to
Christ,

Take them for answer.'

Then with panic haste
He sent a headsman whose keen axe
should end

That high undaunted courage. He,
with fear

And trembling hand, upon her slender
throat

And virgin breast planting three cruel
strokes,

Fled, leaving her for dead. But three
days yet,

Three precious days, she lingered,
strengthening all

Her converts in the Faith, and to the
poor

Vowing her wealth; and last of all she
sent

For Urban, and besought him of his
grace

That of her palace they should make a
church

For Christian worship.

Then she raised her voice
In soaring hymns of praise, and with
her sang

The quire of Angels, chanting row on
row

Celestial strains, and the rapt hearers
knew

The sound of heavenly music and the
lyres

Of the angelic company; and yet,
When her voice soared no longer, but
was still,

Fair dying echoes, fainter and more
faint,

Stole downward from the skies, and
then were lost

Within the heavens—the music of a soul
Which joins the eternal concert and is
blest.

And still where once she sang, the un-
failing spell

Of music rises heavenward, day by
day;

For, as she would, they built a stately
church

Above her. There, when centuries
were past,

The Pontiff Paschal found her body lie,
Wrapt in a tissue of gold, and by her
side

Her husband and his brother.

And, again,
After long centuries they built a shrine,
And set in it a statue of the saint
In Parian marble. On her side she
rests

As one asleep ; the delicate hands are
crossed,

Wrist upon wrist ; a clinging vestment
drapes

The virgin limbs, and round her slender
throat

A golden circlet masks her cruel wound.
And there she lies for all to see ; but
still

Her voice is sounding in the Eternal
Psalm

Which the Church singeth ever, ever-
more,

The Church on earth, the Church of
Saints in Heaven."

And then it was a youthful pair who
came,

And noble both, who to each other
clung

In tender love : he a young soldier tall,
With the proud mien and port of one
who strode

From the far North to the extremest
South

Before Rome's conquering legions, o'er
the world,

Bearing the eagles forth ; she a fond
wife,

Who clasped and kissed his hand, and
gazed on him

With youthful eyes, while with the
unbraided gold

Of her fair hair, bright as the crowns
they wore,

He with pure yearning played. I knew
them not,
Nor doth the world as yet, when thus
my guide :

"Adrian, Tribune of the Imperial
Guard,

When the tenth wave of blood assailed
the Faith

Served in Bithynia. There, a youth in
years,

He lived in wedlock with his youthful
love,

Natalia, fair, and virtuous as fair,
And secretly of Christ. When came
command

That all should kneel before the heathen
gods,

The brave S. George tore from the city
walls

The shameful edict. Then, with coward
rage,

The Pagan Cæsars in one day haled
forth

Two score to death with torture. In
the hall

Of judgment Adrian, as beseemed his
rank,

Stood with his soldiers. Fierce and
fiercer still

The torturers plied their hellish arts ;
and he,

Seeing how firm the martyrs stood and
bore

Fell malice and the black despite of
men,

Wondered to see their pious constancy.
Last, his great heart grew sickened at

the wrong,
And then the strong resistless tide of
Faith

Took him, and he believed, because he
knew,

That this thing was of God ; and his
 brave soul,
 Which scorned concealment and the
 hypocrite's wiles,
 Burst into word and act, and from his
 breast
 He tore the glittering emblems of his
 rank,
 And, flinging from him the dishonoured
 sword
 Which served the Pagan, being now of
 Christ,
 While all his soldiers wondered, know-
 ing not
 What thing he would, amid the painful
 throng
 Of prisoners standing, cried aloud and
 said,
 'I too am with them, for I am of
 Christ ;
 Torture me, slay me, too.' Then,
 with amaze,
 The guards advancing haled him with
 the rest
 To prison and to death. But he gave
 thanks
 For what had been, and, glorying in
 his faith,
 Went with his suffering brethren to his
 doom.

Now, when these things were done,
 there fell deep awe
 And pity on all who heard, and to the
 house
 Of Adrian hastened breathless mes-
 sengers
 To tell of what had been, and how its
 lord,
 Spurning the Pagan gods, had braved
 his doom.

'Adrian is Christian and holds fast the
 Faith,

And goes to torture for his Master's
 name.'

Thus said they ; and his wife, who
 heard the tale,
 Felt her young heart beat slow, then
 cease with pain,
 And swooned ; but when her life re-
 turned to her,
 Gave thanks and wept for joy that he,
 her love,
 Was worthy to bear witness to the Faith
 And know a blessed death.

Quickly she rose
 And hastened to the prison cell, and
 there
 Fell prone on his beloved neck, and
 kissed
 His heavy chains, giving God praise
 that he,
 Like her, was of the Faith, and bade
 him keep
 The Truth through death and torment
 to the end,
 And comforted her love, and clasped
 him round,
 And, on his dear lips showering kisses,
 went
 Back to their lonely palace. Three
 long days
 She spent in prayer for him, on whom
 the fell
 Forces of evil worked their will, and
 doomed
 His life to cruel death ; but never again,
 Loving with all her tender heart, would
 dare
 To seek his prison cell, lest haply Love
 Should conquer Duty ; but her faithful
 prayer
 Rose for him day and night, that he
 might live
 Or die, if such God's will, true to the
 Faith.

But on the prisoner Adrian, longing
 came,
 When now he was condemned and the
 new day
 Should bring him death with pain, if
 only he
 Might see his love once more, and when
 'twas night,
 Though firm and constant in the Faith
 and strong
 To die for it, an innocent desire
 To look once more in those beloved
 eyes,
 And press once more those stainless lips,
 and hear
 Once more that tender voice, and seem
 again
 A lover as of yore ; and, offering
 gold
 And giving surety for his safe return
 Ere the dawn brought the day when he
 should die,
 The prison doors flew open, and he
 stole—
 Free once again, as if the fateful Past
 Were but a dreadful nightmare of his
 sleep—
 Forth from the dungeon's close and
 filthy air,
 Through the cool night, by the familiar
 ways,
 None in the darkness marking him, to
 where,
 Within his palace halls, Natalia mused,
 Sad, silent, lonely, half distraught in
 mind—
 Sad she should see no more the well-
 loved face,
 Glad that her love bare witness to the
 Faith—
 Seeking to exorcise her painful thought
 With spinning.
 Then one hastened in and cried,

' Be of good heart, dear mistress, for
 my lord,
 'Scaping the dungeon, comes and will
 be here.
 Prepare for flight ; you shall live happy
 yet.
 Have all things ready. Lo ! the night
 is dark ;
 Take horse and flee.'
 Then through that faithful heart
 A thousand warring tides of passion
 surged—
 Hope, fear, love, duty, natural joy and
 pride
 Because she was a wife and rapt in love ;
 But at the last, the passion of the Faith
 Prevailing, prone to earth she fell, and
 cried,
 ' Ah, miserable me, who am too vile
 To wed with one who wears the martyr's
 crown !
 Shall not all men cry shame on me,
 whose love
 Led Adrian astray, who else had dared
 The fiercest torments which the devilish
 spite
 Of Hell devised for him ! Oh, my lost
 love,
 'Twere better I should love thee thus,
 and bear
 Part in thy glory, though it came with
 death,
 Than live with thee dishonoured and,
 through me,
 Sinking in coward fear the love of God.
 Nay, my loved Adrian, not for me
 indeed
 Shalt thou deny the Faith.'
 Now Adrian heard,
 Standing without, his wife's beloved
 voice,
 And caught her words, and could not
 brook delay

An instant, but burst swiftly in and
 clasped her
 Close to his heart, and lifting up his
 voice—
 ‘Noblest and best of women, I give
 praise
 To God that thou art strong, and that
 thy soul
 Is steadfast as my own. I do but come
 To say to thee “Farewell,” for with
 the day
 I am condemned to die. Full well I
 knew
 Thy love would never tempt me to be
 false ;
 For only utter faithfulness is love
 But now thy loyal soul has smoothed
 my path
 And left my duty easier, and I go
 Back to my dungeon with a cheerful
 heart
 That I have seen thy face.’

Then she arose
 And kissed him, and upon his breast
 she laid
 Her wifely head ; and straight, without
 a word,
 They twain went unattended through
 the night,
 Who might have fled, and by the well-
 known streets,
 Hushed now and slumbering ; guarded
 by no guard
 Save their own honour, sought the
 prison gate.
 And, much amazed, the warder marked
 them come,
 Hand clasped in hand, and swung the
 sounding door ;
 And in his prison cell till dawn of
 day
 They sate together, waiting for the
 end.

And Adrian, when the day was come,
 went forth
 To judgment, and they scourged him
 sore and racked
 His limbs with cruel tortures. But his
 wife
 They drave forth from him, and he lay
 alone
 On the cold ground, with none to com-
 fort him,
 Since well they knew what charity in-
 spired
 The womanly soft hearts which called
 on Christ ;
 And she, lamenting sore and half dis-
 traught
 Because he suffered with no hand to
 soothe
 His painful limbs, rose suddenly and
 took
 A daring purpose. From her comely
 head
 She sheared the golden treasure of her
 hair,
 Donning man’s garb, and gained the
 prison gate,
 Disguised, nor known to any as she
 went,
 A man with all a woman’s pitying
 heart,
 A woman with the courage of a man ;
 And, gaining entrance, sought her love,
 and bound
 His piteous wounds, soothed him with
 loving words.
 ‘Light of mine eyes, how blest art
 thou,’ she cried,
 ‘To suffer for the Faith !’ and
 strengthened him,
 And lulled his pain to sleep, and with
 him sate,
 Sleep’ess herself, his head upon her
 breast,

Filled with deep grief and saintly
ecstasy,
Until the slow dawn, glimmering,
brought the day.

Then, when the sun had risen, there
came command

That he should die ; but first, with hate-
ful art,

His good right hand they severed while
he lived.

And she saw all, and watched without
a word,

And all her tender woman's heart stood
still

To see his pain, and fain had borne it
all—

Filled with high pride, yet tortured
with regret

That she had wrought this thing ; and
round him cast

Her wifely arms, prayed with him, and
sustained

His ebbing life, till, ere the headsman
came

To sever from the trunk the well-loved
head,

With one deep sigh, he breathed his
last and gave

His soul to God.

But she, when all was done,
Kissed him upon the painless brow, and
stooped

And took his severed hand, the dear
dead hand

Which oft had smoothed her hair ; and
in her bosom,

Upon her wifely breast, she hid it close,
The dear dead hand ! and, hurrying to
her home,

Safe in her palace chamber folded it
With linen kerchiefs fine, and wrapt it
round

With precious spices sweet and per-
fumed oils,

And by her lonely bedside kept it long,
And often, ere the grey dawn broke,
would rise

And kiss and clasp it, giving thanks to
God

That her love kept the Faith.

But the saint's body
Some faithful Christians stealing from
the jail

Bore to Byzantium ; there with pious
care

They buried it, and costly obsequies.

But she, the sainted woman, dwelt alone
Long time within her palace, cherishing
The memory of her love. Cæsar at last,
Hating her constant soul, bade her
prepare

For wedlock with some favourite of the
Court,

A Tribune of the Guard. No word she
breathed

Of disobedience, but one night she fled
Her widowed home, and, taking ship,
sailed forth

To Argyropolis, across the sea ;
And when they told her how her love
was laid

Hard by, within a costly sepulchre,
Dwelt there long time, grown happier
that she held

Her love's beloved dust. Oft in the
night

She rose and took her to the tomb, and
there

Knelt, and full often in her weary sleep,
Heavy with tears, the blessed Adrian
Visited her in dreams, and shone on her
Bright with the glory of beatitude,
Beckoning that she should follow, till
her soul,

Straining its earthly fetters, longed to
 rise
 And join her love in bliss. And so at
 length
 Her fervent prayer was granted. Death
 set free
 That faithful heart ; and when at last,
 it loosed
 Her prisoned spirit, lo ! a glorious quire
 Of Angels, and amid them Adrian,
 To meet her as she rose ; and sphere on
 sphere
 They soared together heavenward into
 joy,
 Where are the just of old, the seers, the
 saints
 And witnesses, and there, no more to
 part,
 Bathed in the full light of the Heavenly
 Sun,
 They dwell together for ever and are
 blest."

And as I listened, rapt in tearful thought,
 And musing on the mystery of Pain
 That wings the saintly soul, I heard
 again :

"Not only through the dungeon or the
 rack
 Is won the Martyr's crown. Blest
 souls indeed
 Are those which suffer openly, and reap
 Through bodily pain the rich reward of
 Love—
 Dear souls and strong ; but those who
 only bear
 The suffering of the soul, when the
 racked spirit
 Gives love for faith, and dooms a life to
 die,

Dearer than life, for duty, and lives
 on
 And bears and does not die, but wears
 its load
 For weary years, and hears no loud
 acclaim
 Of heavenly quires, and bears no victor's
 palm,
 But lives self-doomed to solitude and
 doubt,
 And finds the closed heavens deaf, the
 past a dream,
 And all the future dumb—for these,
 too, Heaven
 Keeps its own crown, as precious as the
 pearl
 Of sacrifice which shining lights the
 brow
 Of agony,—its own triumphant crown.
 For what is martyrdom but witness
 borne
 To God and Truth, in body as in soul,
 Through life and death, through sudden
 stress of pain
 Or life-long suffering witness to the
 Right ? "

'Twas an old man came next, who bore
 the palm,
 Mild and of venerable mien, with hair
 And beard of silver, yet his sunburnt
 cheek
 Showed ruddy with the hue of health
 which still
 Smiles like an Indian summer on the
 lives
 Of those who, far from dust and toil of
 men,
 Like the first Husbandman, breathe
 purer air,

And watch the opening flowers, the
 fruits grow ripe,
 Changing their healthy toil for tranquil
 sleep,
 And mingling works of mercy with
 pure thoughts
 And meditations. Him indeed I knew
 not,
 And yet half guessed his tale.

And this it was :

“ In Pontus, by Sinope, dwelt of old,
 Three centuries after Christ, an aged
 man,
 Phocas by name. He to his lowly
 home
 Retiring from the busy city, spent
 His life in meditation on the Faith
 Sweetening his honest toil. Day after
 day
 Within his narrow garden-ground he
 found
 Fit labour for his hands ; eve after eve,
 When the sweet toilsome day at last
 was done,
 He strayed among the flowers and fruits
 his skill
 Had reared—the roses red and white
 which filled
 The air with perfume, like the fragrant
 flower
 Of sanctitude ; white cups adust with
 gold
 Of lilies, pure as blameless lives, which
 breathe
 Their sweetness to the heavens ; the
 flower which bears
 The symbols of the Passion ; the mild
 roots
 And milky herbs which nourish those
 white lives
 That scorn to batten on the blood and
 pain

Of innocent dumb brutes ; such honeyed
 fruits

As our first parents ate in Paradise—
 Bright apples, golden pears, pink
 pomegranates,

The pendent purple of the trellised
 grape,

And blushing peaches, and the per-
 fumed globes

Of melons ; all the flowers and fruits
 the isles

Of the enchanted dim Hesperides
 Bore in the fabled eld. Of these he
 took

Sufficient for his hunger, praising God,
 And of the rest he gave of charity
 To all the poor and weak, free without
 price,

Following his Master's word. And all
 the poor

And needy blessed him and revered the
 skill

Which reared them, and the venerable
 years

Of that good gardener. None who
 came to him

His generous hand denied, but he would
 give them

Shelter and food, and, when the day
 was done,

Converse on things Divine, and many
 a word

Of Truth which swayed the listener, if
 he were

A Pagan still, or heartened him indeed
 If he already held and loved the Faith.

For while to some pure souls the
 thought, the dream,

The blessed vision are enough, the
 sounds

Heard by rapt ears, the opened heavens,
 the joy

Of contemplation only, when the sands
 Of the desert or the cloistered vistas
 dim
 Show ghostly 'neath the midnight stars ;
 for some
 Labour is best—not sordid labour vile
 And turned to earth, but that which
 working still
 For Heaven doth therefore gain a purer
 height
 Than any; and for him the varied
 page
 Of Nature painted by a hand divine
 Brought meditation, and he found a
 voice
 In every bursting flower and mellowing
 fruit ;
 In every life which, governing its way
 By heavenly rule, lived on without
 offence
 And did fulfil its part ; in every weed
 Which cumbered earth, yet doubtless
 were of aid
 If we might read its secret ; every
 growth
 Of poison, which from the same ele-
 ments,
 The bounteous earth, the wooing of
 the sun,
 The same fair fanning breezes, as the
 grain
 On which our lives are nourished,
 waxed and grew
 To deal out death and torment. Long
 he mused
 On all these things—how one great
 Husbandman
 Planted them all, and framed them as
 He framed
 The tiger and the lamb ; and so he
 gained
 Mild wisdom from his daily task, and
 awe,

And wonder, which is kin to faith, and
 thence
 True faith in God and man, and was
 content
 To sow the seed of good within his soul,
 As in the earth, and root the evil out,
 And living only for the Faith, to work
 And be at peace, leaving the rest to
 Him
 Who sends in season, sun and rain and
 cloud
 And frost, and in whose hand are flower
 and fruit
 To give or to withhold, in earth and
 heaven.

Now, one fair summer eve, as Phocas
 sate
 At supper, came a knock, and he in
 haste
 Opening, three strangers waited at the
 door,
 Whom he bade enter and take food and
 rest ;
 And when they were refreshed, he
 questioned them
 What errand brought them. And they
 said in turn,
 'We seek a certain Phocas—know'st
 thou him?—
 Who dares to call on Christ, and have
 command
 To slay him found.' Then tranquilly
 the saint—
 'Sleep now and rest. I know him.
 With the dawn
 I will conduct you to him.' And they
 slept,
 Not dreaming whom they saw, and
 were content.

But he, when all the house was dark
 and still,

Stole out into his garden. The faint
 stars,
 Pale in the radiance of the summer
 night,
 Trembled above him ; at his feet the
 flowers
 He loved so well declined their heavy
 heads
 And slumbering petals. One loud
 nightingale,
 Thrilling the tender passionate note of
 old,
 Throbb'd from a flower-cupped tree,
 and round him all
 The thousand perfumes of the summer
 night
 Steeped his pleased sense in fragrance
 sweeter far
 Than frankincense the skill of men
 compounds
 In Araby the Blest. Then on the
 grass
 He sate him down, rapt deep in musing
 thought ;
 And o'er him, ghostly white or gleam-
 ing red,
 The roses glimmered, and the lilies
 closed
 Their pure white cups, and bowed their
 heads, and seemed
 To overhear his thought. 'Should he
 then fly,
 To live a little while, leaving his home
 And all that made it dear, the flowers,
 the fruits
 He loved, and preach the Faith a little
 yet
 Before Fate called him ? Surely life is
 sweet
 To tranquil souls, which scorn delights
 and take
 Something of Heaven on earth ; ay,
 sweeter far

Than the old haste of flushed and
 breathless chase,
 Strong pulses, vaulting projects, hot
 designs
 To capture worthless ends. Haply
 'twere well
 For this, to leave the solitude he loved
 As others wife or child.'
 But as he mused,
 The thought of full obedience filled his
 soul ;
 Submissive to the Heavenly Will which
 sent
 Those fatal messengers, and destinee
 for him
 The martyr's crown, and swayed and
 took so fast
 His doubtful mind, that presently he
 rose,
 As one whose purpose halts not—rose
 and went
 As in a dream, and coming brought a
 spade
 And softly, half in dreams, began to
 delve
 The flower-lit turf, within a sheltered
 nook
 O'ergrown with roses and the perfumed
 gloom
 Of blossomed trees. And as he wrought,
 he laid
 Turf upon turf, and hollowed out a
 space
 In the fresh virgin mould which lay
 beneath,
 Shaped deftly in the semblance of a
 cross,
 Large as might take the stature of a
 man.
 And still half dreaming, nor confessing
 yet
 What thing he did, deeper and yet
 more deep

He dug and laboured, till with earliest dawn,

Just as the waking birds began their song,

He flung the last mould upwards, smoothing fair

The edges of the trench, and knew at length

That all night long he laboured at his grave.

And at its foot were lilies white and gold,

And at its head were roses white and red,

And all around a pitying quire of flowers

Bent down regarding it; and when he saw,

Still half as in a dream, he whispered,
'Lo!

The narrow bed is ready; ere 'tis day
The sleeper shall be laid in it, and prove

Unbroken slumbers blest, until the peal

Of the loud Angel wakes him from the skies.'

Then to his home returning grave and slow,

He sought his guests, on whom the new-born day

Was rising. They with half-awakened eyes

Greeted their coming host, and, bidding him

Good morrow, rose and took the frugal meal

His care provided. Then the question came,

'Hast brought him whom we seek?'
And he: 'I have.

And they: 'Where find we him?'
And he: 'Behold,

I am the man—none else.' Then deep distress

Took them, and great perplexity, who knew

The man whose life they sought the same who gave

Shelter and food. But he, revolving all,

The martyr's palm and that unchanged resolve

Of the still night, bade them take heart for all

Their duty bade them. And he led them forth,

Through maiden flowers fresh opened to the day,

Brushing the dewdrops from them as they went

To where, set round with blooms, they found his grave

Fresh delled in daisied turf, and there they bound

Their willing prisoner, and the heads-man's axe,

Even as he knelt, a smile upon his lips,
By one swift, skilful blow and merciful,

Upon the grassy margin, painlessly Severed his life. And there they laid

him down,
Amid the joyous matins of the birds,

In the cool earth; and by his head there sprang

Sweet roses red and white, and by his feet

Deep-chaliced lilies mingled white with gold;

And there he waits the day the just shall rise

And bloom, as these on earth, beyond the skies."

But when I heard the gracious tale,
 which showed
 Like some fair blossom with a fragrant
 heart,
 Thus would I answer: "Blameless
 anchorite,
 Meek martyr, self-betrayed, some saints
 there be
 Whose youthful suffering draws a
 readier tear
 Than thine; and yet, for me, that
 duteous life
 Of honest toil for others, that great faith
 Thou show'dst, that simple eagerness
 to bear
 The martyr's palm, that night beneath
 the stars
 Of summer, fashioning thy flower-
 decked grave,
 That lonely suffering, mark thy life and
 death
 With a more calm and gracious note
 than theirs
 Who, 'mid the applauding saints around,
 the throng
 Of heavenly faces stooping from the
 skies,
 In the arena dauntless met their end;
 A simpler nor less touching piety
 Than theirs who, 'mid the dust of
 mortal strife,
 Shed their pure lives upon the sullen
 sand."

And then there passed a beautiful fair
 maid,
 A virgin martyr, from whose comely
 head
 Shone brighter than her crown, a ray
 serene

Of stainless purity. Her spotless robe
 Gleamed with strange light, and at her
 breast she bore
 Celestial lilies and a fragrant spoil
 Of roses red and white, red as the blood
 Of Martyrdom, white as the innocent
 life
 Of maidenhood; and straight I knew
 the name
 Of Dorothea, whose fair story fires
 Poet and painter still; and as I gazed
 I heard, with eager ears, my guide
 recount
 The half-remembered tale, and thus he
 spake:

"In Cæsarea dwelt a noble maid,
 A Christian, serving God with prayer
 and alms
 And fasting. None more beautiful or
 pure
 In all the city, and her fitting name
 Was Dorothea. And the fame of her,
 Her beauty, and her saintly life went
 forth

Through all the country.

When the governor,
 Who hated Christ, holding the older
 creed,
 Heard of her name and deeds, he gave
 command
 That they should bring her to him.
 On a day
 He sate on high in judgment, when
 they brought
 The maid; and she, with mantle folded
 close
 Around her, and chaste downcast eyes,
 drew near,
 When he with threatening voice would
 ask of her,
 'Who art thou?' And the maiden:
 'Sir, my name

Is Dorothea, and I serve the Lord.
 Then he, with fury : 'Thou shalt serve
 our gods
 Or die the death.' But she, with ac-
 cents mild :
 'If I shall die, the sooner shall my
 eyes
 Behold His Presence whom they long
 to see.'
 And he : 'Whom namest thou?' Then
 she : 'The Lord,
 In whom I live, who is my Heavenly
 Spouse,
 Who dwells in Paradise, with whom I
 long
 To be, leaving this dead poor earth,
 and know
 The fruits that mellow in His garden-
 ground,
 The roses that shall never fade, but
 bear
 Such amaranthine blooms as heat nor
 cold
 Withers, nor time, but blush for ever
 sweet.
 Work thou thy will. For me to die is
 gain,
 And to live, loss ; but for thy Pagan
 gods,
 I will have none of them, nor sacrifice
 To wood or stone, the figments of
 men's hands.'

Then he, who could not bend that
steadfast soul,
Commanded they should take her to
her cell.
Thither he summoned an apostate pair,
Christita and Calista, once of Christ,
On whom the fear of swift and painful
death,
The terror of the torments which the
spite

Of men prepared for them, worked in
such sort
That they renounced the Faith and
knelt again
Before the old false gods. To these he
gave
Great promise of reward if they should
make
This noble virgin partner in their sin,
And to her prison cell, day after day,
Despatched them, and they strove to
do his will,
Using the coward's weapons,—fear of
death,
Hope of some baser happiness, and
doubts
If 'twere indeed of God the Faith she
held,
Or if 'twere haply best to live and
serve
The elder gods to whom their fathers
knelt ;
And how 'twas sweeter far to know the
love
Of spouse and children, and the joys of
home,
Than to fling life away upon a dream,
And feel the ravening tigers' jaws, the
bite
Of the keen flames, withering the flesh,
the keen
Thin knives, the crushing rack, and all
the arts
Of the tormentors' hands. But as they
spake
She with such faith reproved their
perfidy
That in despair they ceased.

At last, in turn,
With lucid thought and Heaven-sent
utterance
She bore on them; dressed with such
precious robes

The beauty of the Truth; spurned with
 such power
 The Pagan lie; showing with pitying
 love
 The misery of unfaith, the joys they
 lost
 Who did deny the Faith, knowing it
 true
 And having once believed; that
 suddenly,
 As self-convicted by the accusing voice
 Of their own selves, those weak
 apostate souls
 Shrank from her as from a consuming
 fire,
 And, grown repentant of their wrong,
 confessed
 Their fault, and, falling down before
 her feet,
 Besought her she would pray for them,
 and seek
 Remission of their sins; and she,
 indeed,
 With great joy kneeling with them,
 sought in prayer
 Forgiveness for their fault, and when
 they rose,
 She kissed them, and they went, with
 steadfast voice
 And joyful, openly confessing Christ.

But when the tyrant learnt what thing
 had been,
 He gave command that those poor
 penitents
 Should die by fire before the virgin's
 eyes,
 That she might share their pain. The
 fierce flames leapt,
 The hapless sisters suffered, giving
 praise.
 And Dorothea watched their pangs,
 and cried,

'Fear not, dear sisters; suffer to the
 end,
 And take for price of those brief fleet-
 ing pains
 Eternal bliss in Heaven.' So they
 died firm.
 And she, in turn before the tyrant
 brought,
 Was doomed to instant death. But
 ere she died
 They racked her tender limbs, while
 she gave thanks
 And bore their worst unmoved; and
 then they led her
 To where the headsman with his gleam-
 ing axe
 Awaited her, and with him welcome
 Death.

But as she passed, there rose the mock-
 ing voice
 Of one, a lawyer, who, when first the
 maid
 Was brought to judgment, mocked the
 words she spake
 Of the sweet flowers and fruits of
 Paradise,
 Which ever in the garden of the Lord
 Spring in perpetual beauty; nor doth
 there
 Snow come, nor frost, but evermore
 the heavens
 Smile on them, and they ripen, till
 they breathe
 Celestial odours fine, celestial hues
 Brighten them, and whoso shall take
 of them
 Shall taste eternal bliss. Seeing her
 pass,
 And mindful of her words, inflamed
 with scorn,
 His shallow witless mirth and Pagan
 spite

Brake forth. 'Fair maiden hastening
to thy Spouse,
Send me, I pray thee, of the fruits, the
flowers
Of His celestial garden ; for with us
'Tis winter, and no flowers nor fruits
are here,
But only clouds and snows and bitter
winds,
Scourging the naked fields. Send me
of them,
For fain am I to take them.' As he
spake
The maiden, bending, with a gentle
smile,
Answered, 'I will.' And he, with
scoffs and jeers,
Turned with his graceless fellows,
mocking her ;
But she went calm and cheerful to her
death.

Now, when she reached the place
where she should die,
She knelt awhile, bowing her head in
prayer ;
And when she rose prepared for death,
there came
A precious portent. For beside her
stood,
To comfort her, a youthful Angel
fair,
With locks of gold, and eyes like
autumn skies ;
And in his hands he bore, so runs the
tale,
A basket, and, within, three golden
fruits
Of Paradise, of scent and hue divine,
And with them three fair roses, sweeter
far
Than the twice-bearing Pæstine gardens
bare,

Summer and autumn. Then, with a
sweet smile
Of Faith triumphant : 'Pray you, good
my lord,
Carry these fruits and flowers to him
who spake
While I was passing to my death, and
say,
"'Tis Dorothea sends them, and she
goes
Before thee to the garden whence they
came,
And doth await thee there.'" Then with the word
She bent her gentle neck upon the
block,
And took the blow which sped her soul
to Heaven.

Now, as she died, the scoffing lawyer
stood
Among his comrades, jesting at the gift
The maiden promised. But when now
they sate
Feasting, around them gilded images
Of the false gods, taking no care nor
thought
For what had been, the torture and the
pain,
Lo ! suddenly a heavenly presence
showed,
From whence he knew not, fair, with
shining face,
And locks of gold, and eyes as blue as
Heaven,
And in his hand a basket with the
fruits
And flowers of Paradise, who spake no
word
But, 'Dorothea sends them, and she
goes
Before thee to the garden whence they
came,

Lavish, indeed, yet blest—high sacrifice
Vowed to great ends and blest, my ears
were full,

As one in pilgrim's garb, ascetic, seared,
Still with some ghost of pain, and
some faint trace

Of sadness in his eyes, and yet withal,
Despite his humble garb and lowly
port,

A Roman noble, met my curious gaze ;
And this the tale I heard :

“When the first Innocent was Pope
of Rome,

A Senator there was, Euphemian,
Who long with Aglaë, his wife, had
prayed,

Having great riches and no heir to
take them,

For offspring of their love. At length
their prayer

Was granted, and a son was born to
them,

Alexis, fair of body and white of soul.

Him the blest vision through his grow-
ing years

Failed not, but always on his life there
shone

The light of the Unseen, so that he
fared

Through all the heats of youth a soul
unstained,

Clothed in the spotless garb of inno-
cence,

And, 'mid the pomps of rank and
riches, still

Lived evermore in great humility

As lived his Master, and still kept a
heart

Touched with compassion for the poor
and weak ;

And, being purer than the rest, was
fain,

Through self-contempt and saintly
diffidence,

To mortify the sinful flesh, and make
A daily penance for the wrong he
loathed.

Therefore, while outwardly in silks and
gold,

The emblems of his proud patrician
birth,

He showed before men's eyes, he bore
beneath,

Seeking to mortify this load of flesh,
Next to his heart, a painful vest of
hair ;

And, though he walked before men's
eyes a bright

And smiling presence, in his secret cell
Bewailed with vigils and with tears the
wrong

He never did, a pure soul bowed and
bent

By the great burden of the sinful world.

Thus sped the fleeting years, which
crowned his youth

With manhood. Never did his dream-
ing thought

Turn to the earth or earthly things,
but still

The heavens stood open ; the immortal
youth

Of the adoring angels dimmed the
charm

Of earthly beauty, and he lived apart,
Like that rapt boy who saw as in a glass
A fair reflected image in the stream,

And loved it only. Then the sire and
dame,

Because they fain would see their noble
tree

Blossom before they died, would urge
their son

That he should wed, and named to him
 a maid
 Fair, modest, high of birth, higher of
 soul,
 Whom from a child he knew, and well
 had loved;
 And he, long time delaying, at the last,
 Being dutiful and fain to do their will,
 Assented, and the glad day dawned
 when they
 Together in God's house, bridegroom
 and bride,
 Knelt at the altar, and the vows were
 pledged
 And the words spoken which should
 make them one.

So all day long the joyous marriage
 feast
 Sped gaily to the cheerful sound of song.
 But from his bride, her soft eyes look-
 ing love,
 The young Alexis stood apart, and
 mused
 As one whom some deep sorrow presses
 down;
 And through the long halls passing,
 sad, distraught,
 To all the greetings of the courtly throng
 Made hardly answer. For before his
 eyes
 Ever the beatific dream of old,
 The virginal whiteness of the saints,
 the pure
 Angelic faces bent before the throne,
 Filled all his musing thought, until the
 feast,
 The acclaiming friends, the mirth, nay,
 the meek face
 Of his young bride, showed dim and
 scarcely seen
 Before his rapturous gaze; nor could
 he brook

The innocent thoughts of love fulfilled
 which flush
 The dreams of youth. Such thoughts
 were not for one
 Who had seen the opened heavens, the
 throng of saints,
 And the pure Virgin Mother; not for him
 The pulse of earthly passion. Could
 he dare
 To quench in deeps of sense the pale
 white fire
 Of the ascetic soul? Could mortal love
 Allure him from his heavenly home, or
 turn
 His duteous thought to earth? Nay,
 nay; he could not.
 A stern voice bade him fly, while yet
 'twas time.
 And yet 'twas hard to leave the home
 he loved
 And those who loved him. But what
 said the Word?
 'Who leaves not father, mother, wife,
 and child
 For Me and for My kingdom, loves
 not me.'
 'Love I not thee, oh Lord? Shall not
 I dare
 To give all things for Thee? And yet
 Thy Word
 Bids each man, leaving all, cleave to
 his wife.
 How shall I dare desert her in her grief?
 How shall I bear to leave her to men's
 spite
 And mockery—a wife her husband
 shuns,
 A bride yet not a wife. And my dear
 sire,
 And gracious mother? Is not wedlock
 blest,
 And are they not of Thee? Do I not
 cast

Reproach on those white souls, who
 lived in pure
 And blessed union? If our Lord on
 earth
 Dwelt in His father's house, and
 deigned to be
 In Cana, at the marriage feast, nor
 scorned
 To make the water wine, why should
 not I—
 Being but a worm, indeed, a thing of
 naught,
 Too low, too vile for Heaven, too weak
 for earth—
 Why should not I, taking my humble
 place
 In the great throng of life, foregoing all
 My dim celestial dream, bearing the
 cross
 In all humility, accept my part,
 Rearing my children in the fear of God
 And love of Christ, hastening the
 blessed hour
 When all the world is His, and He
 shall tread
 All earthly crowns beneath His feet
 and reign
 A King among His saints? Surely
 'twere best
 To advance His kingdom thus? And
 then he turned
 Back to the joyful feast, and sate beside
 His innocent love, regarding well con-
 tent
 Her fair unsullied beauty, and would
 strive
 To take the joyous greetings of his kin,
 And look with loving glances on his
 bride.

 So all day long the joyous marriage
 feast
 Sped gaily to the cheerful noise of song.

And now the sun had sunk beyond the
 west,
 And night had fallen, when a dread
 voice seemed
 To summon him away, bidding him fly
 The world and worldly joys. So clear
 it came
 And awful to his ear, he could not
 stay,
 He durst not tarry. 'I have need of
 thee,
 Alexis'—so it spake. And he, who-
 heard
 The voice as of the Lord, without a
 doubt,
 Obedient to the heavenly summons, rose
 And sought his bride; and on her
 hand he set,
 In token of his love and troth, a ring
 Of purest gold, and round her slender
 waist
 A zone of precious gems, and on her
 head
 A veil of costly purple. Then in tears,
 The dread voice calling always, with
 one kiss
 He left her, and flung forth into the
 night,
 Unseen, and no man found him till he
 died

 Then through that hapless house there
 went a sound
 Of wailing. All the ways they searched
 to find
 The truant, but in vain; and straight
 their joy
 Was turned to grief, and they in garb
 of woe
 Sate mourning, without hope, the son,
 the spouse,
 Whom never should they see until the
 end.

But when the bridegroom fled into the
 night,
 Leaving behind him light and life and
 love,
 Obedient always to the heavenly voice
 Which summoned him away, his faltering
 steps
 Led him to Tiber's bank, whereon he
 found
 A little boat; and, clad in pilgrim's
 garb,
 All night he laboured seaward, till he
 came
 To Ostia. There a bark in act to sail
 For Asia took him, and he crossed the
 deep,
 An exile self-pursued. No vain regret
 For vanished riches held him, or lost
 love,
 Or for the toil and hunger which he
 dared,
 Following the heavenly voice, and so
 content.
 Only at times some shade of doubt
 would come,
 Considering all his mother's love, his
 sire
 Left childless, and the sad surprise
 which filled
 His bride's sweet eyes when he would
 go from her,
 And how the house stood empty of
 delight,
 And how those innocent lives must
 pine and droop
 That he might do God's will; and all
 the load
 And tangle of the too-perplexed world!

 So, after storm-tost days, he gained at
 length
 The Syrian shore, and there long time
 he lived,

A hermit, at Edessa, lone, unknown,
 Spending his days in alms, his nights
 in prayer,
 Till gradually through the land his
 fame
 Waxed, and the people's voice ac-
 claimed him saint.
 Then he, who wept his villainess and
 was filled
 With saintly thoughts of deep humility,
 Fled once again, sailing across the sea
 For Tarsus, where of old the sainted
 Paul
 Hallowed the earth.
 But a great tempest rose,
 And drove the ship for many a darkling
 day
 Far from her course; and when the
 sky grew clear,
 Behold, the well-remembered coast
 again
 By Ostia, where the yellow Tiber stains
 The purple depths of the Tyrrhenian
 Sea,
 And, lost in distance on the northern
 sky,
 Rome and the stately palace of his sires.

 But when Alexis saw the well-known
 shore
 Hard by his ancient home, straightway
 his soul
 Was filled once more with doubt,
 because he knew
 That 'twas the Lord who ruled the
 storm, and drove
 The strong ship from her course; and
 when he mused
 On all the past, how the strange people
 turned
 His humbleness to pride, it seemed
 indeed
 That here was his best sacrifice—to live

Within his father's house, unseen,
unknown.

For since long years of penury had
worked

Their will on him, and seared his cheek,
and bent

His body, and bleached his hair, and
hardly left

The embers of his youth, he might
deceive

The gaze of loving eyes.

So he set forth,

Wrapped in his pilgrim's cloak, along
the still

Dead marsh, a solitary wayfarer,

Slow, leaning on his staff, obscured
with dust

And weariness, until, at last, with eve
Rome and the stately palace of his sires.

Now when he gained the lofty gate
where dwelt

His noble sire, the loved home of his
youth

And manhood, where his fair unwedded
wife

Still pined for him, the Lord Euphe-
mian

Went forth with all his pomp ; and as
he passed,

Alexis—knowing all the work of time

And toil and fastings, and his whitened
hair,

His furrowed brow, his straight form
bowed and bent,

His ragged garb, which was a robe of
silk,

And all the change, whose briefer name
is age—

Stood forth, and threw him at his feet,
and sought

Some humble food and shelter. And
his sire,

Knowing his son was meek and pitiful
Of all the poor and weak, and how,
perchance,

He, too, was now a wanderer poor as
this,

Was touched with ruth and raised the
suppliant,

Bade him be of good cheer, and signed
to them

Who followed, they should give him
food and place

Beneath his palace roof, and, charging
them

That he should want for nothing, went
his way ;

Nor knew he by his blood's unwonted
thrill

That 'twas his son he looked on. So
once more

Within his father's house Alexis lay.

But those his careless menials, knowing
naught

Of what had been, and deeming him no
more

Than the poor wayworn wanderer he
seemed,

Beneath the marble staircase of the
house,

Found him some darkling cell, wherein
he stayed

Being gentle and of great humility ;

And seeing him so meek, no chiding
word

E'er passed his uncomplaining lips, they
deemed,

With the dull insolence of servitude,

That 'twas some idiot, weak of speech
and brain,

Who lay there ; and they plucked his
beard and smote

His patient cheek, and on his suffering
head

Heaped dust and ashes. But he spake
 no word
 Reproachful of them, knowing well
 indeed
 How great the load of his offence, and
 how
 The Lord of all was mocked upon the
 Tree.
 So in the house where he was heir to
 all,
 He lay long years, knowing the bitter
 bread
 Of penury, and cold, and all despite.
 Long years he lived, below the lowest
 slave
 In food and lodging, who was heir to
 all.

But harder than all else it was to bear
 The daily, nightly sights and sounds of
 home ;
 To see his mother, ageing day by day,
 Pass forth, still mourning for her son,
 and fear
 To meet the eyes which, had they met
 his own,
 Piercing his secret through, had ended
 all ;
 To know himself the cause of grief and
 woe
 To her who bore him ; yet withhold
 the word
 Which spoken had brought joy to inno-
 cent hearts !

And most of all things was it grief to
 him,
 In the dead hours when all beside was
 still,
 Nightly to hear the sound of grief and
 tears,
 And know the voice of her who was his
 bride,

Widow ere wedded. 'Whither, love,
 art gone ?'
 So wailed the voice ; 'and wherefore
 didst thou wed,
 To leave me thus to mourn for thee,
 and bear
 Despite and scorn of men ? Are we
 not one,
 Knit by the law of God,—one flesh, one
 soul,
 One being, fused by the mysterious
 word
 Which spoken joined our lives ? Re-
 turn ! return !
 I weary for thy voice. Return ! oh
 love !
 But thou art far across the pitiless
 seas,
 Or, haply, 'mid the sunless ways of
 death !'

Night after night the wailings came and
 pierced
 His heart, and banished sleep, and
 wrung his soul
 With torture ; for the suffering of the
 soul,
 Deeper than bodily anguish piercing,
 wears
 The writhing life. For sometimes he
 would dream
 He heard the voice, and then a mock-
 ing fiend
 Would chide him for his flight, and
 whisper, 'Rise.
 Duty lies plain before thee. Rise and
 seek
 Thy injured wife ; ask pardon of thy
 sire,
 And her thy mother. Pride it was—
 naught else—
 Apeing contrition, drove thee, that thou
 wert

Not as the world, the dim unnoted
 throng
 Of those for whom the trivial daily road
 Lies between lilies. Rise and take thy
 place,
 Bearing the wholesome load of common
 life,
 As did thy sires before thee.'

Then the saint :
 'I may not know if I do right indeed,
 Such doubt o'erclouds my soul ; but
 this I know—

There is a whiteness in virginity ;
 There is a virtue in the life withdrawn
 By desert sands or antred wilds, apart
 From wealth, and ease, and crowded
 haunts of men.

There, on the vigils of the saints, the
 skies

Stand parted sudden, and the Mother
 of God

Opens her virgin arms and clasps her
 Son,

Virgin like her ; and round the throne
 there shine

Angels and high archangels, row on
 row,

Pure all and virgin ; and below them
 stand

The virgin martyrs. These my eyes
 have seen ;

These, when the desert stars shone clear
 and cold,

And lions roared around the springs ;
 these, too,

These, when the hot noon quivered
 round the palms,

The opening heavens revealed. And
 shall I bear

To tread the flowery paths of life and
 sink

To earthly joys? Nay, I am vowed, I
 am vowed !

The fields grow white, the harvest of
 the Lord

Ripens, and shall men dream of wed-
 lock, now

At the full end and judgment of the
 world?

Then with divided soul Alexis rose—
 It was the dead of night—and through
 the long

Hushed corridors, with noiseless foot-
 fall, sought,

If haply he might see his love again,
 Himself unseen, the well-remembered
 door ;

And, pausing at the threshold, spied
 within

His maiden consort, kneeling bathed
 in tears,

Keeping a vigil for the man she
 mourned,

And heard her loving lips pronounce his
 name

In grief. 'Alexis, whither art thou
 gone?

Return, my love, return !

Even where he stood,
 Hid by the arras, reached the wailing
 voice,

And, by her lamp's dim light, he saw
 the lines

On the beloved brow, which time and
 grief

Had drawn, and all for him ; and then
 great ruth

And yearning took him, and he longed
 to speak.

But while he mused, loud on his watch-
 ing ear

A voice, which seemed of God, arose
 and hushed

All thoughts beside. 'Alexis, be thou
 strong.'

Then, with a groan as of a breaking heart,

His grief burst into utterance, and sighed,

'No more, dear wife, no more!'

And then he stole,
Ghost-like, to his own place.

But she who heard
The words, and knew the voice, gazed
with wide eyes,

Then swooned, as 'twere his spirit
greeting her;

Nor slept, but with the morning told
the tale,

And, grieving deep, was somewhat
comforted

To think that he had come to her from
Heaven.

And he, when he had gained his poor
retreat,

Slept not. His suffering heart was
riven in twain,

His limbs refused their office, and his
voice

Grew feeble, as by sickness marred, or
age.

Nor from his humble pallet ever again
Rose he, but sank, with every day that
came,

To deeper weakness still. At last he
knew

His hour was come, and so implored
of one

Who tended him, the means to write;
and then

A letter wrote he, setting forth at large
The truth of all these things, and his
sad life,

And prayed forgiveness of his sins, and
hid

The scroll within his vesture, next his
heart,

And then his face grew calmer, and
his eye

As of a saint in glory. Till one day
They found him in his poor cell, lying
dead

Clasping the letter, on his face a smile.

Now, when Alexis lay in act to die,
It chanced that very day Pope Innocent
Said solemn Mass for Cæsar, and the
Court

Knelt round, and, with the rest,
Euphemian.

And when the mystic sacrifice was done,
And the proud concourse turned in act
to go,

From the high altar pealed a voice
which said

In solemn accents, 'Seek the holy man
Who this day comes to die, and ask of
him

His prayers for Rome;' and while in
awe they stayed

Expectant, then the strange voice once
again—

'Go, seek him of the Lord Euphemian.'
And he, who heard it, knew not what
the words

Meant, but, the Emperor bidding him,
went forth

To gain his home, while after him there
came

Cæsar and all the Fathers of the Church,
With long-drawn pomp, the Pontiff at
their head.

But, when Euphemian gained his
stately house,

Lo! dark upon the gleaming marble
stair

The slaves had laid a lifeless body down
To carry forth for burial; and they
said

To him who questioned them, 'My
gracious Lord,
This was the pilgrim whom thou bad'st
us take
Beneath thy roof years since, and he
till now
Hath dwelt here of thine alms. An
hour ago
He died, and soon we bear him to his
grave ;
But in his grasp he holds a secret scroll
Which never would he part with, night
or day.
See ! will it please you look upon his
face ?'

Then, with great awe, the Lord Euphe-
mian
Drew nigh the bier, remembering the
voice
Which sent him there and bade him
kneel and ask
A blessing of the dead, like him of old
Who fed the holy angels unawares,
And, marked with reverent eyes the
pilgrim garb,
The scroll grasped tight within the
wasted hand,
And all the marks of saintly poverty,
Nor knew on whom he looked. But
when he drew
The face-cloth from the visage of the
dead,
His life stood still ; for straight the
father's heart,
Through all disguise of penury and
years,
Leapt to his son. For, lo ! the way-
worn face
Grew young in death, a smile was on
the lip
As of old time, but round the saintly
head

There shone a glory brighter than the
day—
Sign of his rank in Heaven ; and on
his knees
The father fell before the son, and wept,
Giving God praise. And while he
knelt, there came
Cæsar and Pontiff, and they knelt with
him ;
And the Pope reverently pressed the
hand
Stiffened in death, beseeching of the
dead
That he should give the scroll. And
straight his grasp,
Relaxing, yielded ; and the Chancellor
Read to the assembled nobles the
strange tale
Of Life and Death, which thou hast
heard to-day.

But when within the house the news
was told,
The childless mother and the widowed
wife,
Descending, threw themselves upon
the bier,
Kissing the wasted form ; plunged
deep in woe,
Yet taking comfort that the dead they
loved
Reigned now among the saints. Seven
days and nights
They watched and wept before him,
and a throng
Of halt and sick, and many a one was
healed
Of his infirmity Such things the saint
Wrought, with God's help, upon them
for their faith.

Then, lest some secular use might mar
the place

Made sacred by his pain, upon the
ground
Where stood that stately house, they
reared the Church
Of S. Alexis, and the marble stair
Which sheltered him they left as when
he died.
And there a sculptor carved him, in
mean garb
Reclining, by his side his pilgrim's staff,
And in his hand the story of his life
Of virgin pureness and humility."

And, when the tale was done, again
my guide :
"Shall any scoff, deeming the sacrifice
Was vain, a sheer self-torment all
unasked,
Which wrecked four innocent lives?
Does God then ask
Such service of His creatures? Does
He cast
Contempt upon His gracious paths of
life,
Which all alike may tread—the precious
flowers
Which, by the sacred light and warmth
of home,
Bloom fragrant to the skies; the
childish eyes
Which bring back Heaven; the price-
less liturgies
Of daily fruitful sacrifice; the joys
Shared, and so doubled; all the
blessèd pain
Of loss; the open grave; the sacred
grief
That lifts us from the earth? Nay,
nay, our lives
Are double, and our souls, as fitting
those

Who move from earth to Heaven.
Life has its joys,
And all may take them blameless.
Yet there is
A something higher, too, than these—
a thrill
Of ecstasy, a perfect path which hangs
Heavenward upon the everlasting hills,
Above the flowery meads, the harvest
fields,
The blushing vineyards, 'mid the peril-
ous snows
Where comes not life. Know we not
well the snare
Of wealth, the deep retributive pain of
sense,
Which oftentimes clog the sad wayfarer's
feet
Who treads life's common paths. Some
souls there be
Too fine and pure to tread them.
Were it well
That this brave heart had borne its
share of love
And rank and riches, and had lived its
life,
Making another's happy in like sort,
And spent its little tale of common days,
And passed and left no sign? Or was
it best
To have touched a high ideal unattained,
To have grown from sufferance to high
victory,
To have left the world a story, which
shall serve
For ages yet, of soul defeating sense;
Of aspirations flown too high for earth;
Of life which spurns the binding chains
of love,
And lower weal, and blameless happi-
ness,
And soars aloft and takes the hues of
Heaven?"

And then it was a girl who seemed a youth,
 With pure sweet eyes, wearing a monkish garb,
 Within whose arms a young child nestled close,
 While she along the fields of Paradise
 Plucked lilies for it. Spotless innocence
 Shone from her, and around her comely head
 A finer motherhood. And thus the voice

"In Egypt long ago a humble hind
 Lived happy. One fair daughter of his love
 Was his, a modest flower, that came to bless
 The evening of his days. But time and change
 Assailed his well-loved home, and took from him
 The partner of his life; and when the blow
 Had fallen, loathing of the weary world
 Seized him, and, leaving his young girl behind
 With some who tended her, he went his way
 Across the desert sands, and in a cave
 Long time he lived, a pious eremite
 Withdrawn from men. But when the rapid years
 Hurried his child to budding maidenhood,
 Knowing the perils of the world, his soul
 Grew troubled, and he could not bear the dread

That day and night beset him for her sake;
 So that his vigils and his prayers seemed vain,
 Nor bore their grateful suffrage to the skies,
 Since over all his mind would brood a doubt
 For her and her soul's health, revolving long
 How she should 'scape the world and be with him,
 Because no woman might draw near the cell
 Of any pious hermit. At the last
 He counselled her, taking the garb of man,
 To come to him, leaving the world behind;
 And the fair girl, loving her sire, obeyed,
 And lived with him in duty to the end.
 And when he died, leaving the girl alone,
 The brethren of a cloistered convent near,
 Seeing the friendless youth, and pitying
 His loneliness, and holding high his love
 For his dead sire, offered him food and home
 Within the holy house; and there he served,
 A young man in the blossom of his age,
 Sweet natured, pious, humble, drawing to him
 The friendship of the youths, the love of maids
 But all his soul was rapt with thoughts of Heaven,

Taking no thought for earth, and so it
came
The youthful Brother grew in every
grace
And great humility, and was to all
Example of good life and saintly
thought,
And was Marinus to the monks, who
loved
Their blameless serving-lad, nor knew
at all
That 'twas a maid indeed who lived
with them.

Now, as in all humility he served,
The Abbot, trusting him beyond the
rest,
Would send him far across the desert
sands,

With wagons and with oxen, to the sea,
As steward for the House ; and often-
times

The young man stayed far from his
convent home,

With some rude merchant who pur-
veyed their food ;

And oft amid the wild seafaring folk
His days were passed, and coarse dis-
ordered lives ;

And oftentimes the beauty of the youth
Drew many a woman's heart who
deemed him man.

But still the saintly tenour of her way
The maiden kept, serene, with innocent
eyes,

So that before her face the ribald rout
Grew sober, and among the styes of
sense

Unstained she walked in spotless purity,
A youth in grace, keeping a virgin heart.

But one, the daughter of his host, would
cast

A loving eye upon him—all in vain ;
For careless still he went his way, nor
took

Heed of her love nor her, and oftentimes
He would reprove her of his maiden
soul,

Knowing a woman's weakness, and
would say,

' Sister, I prithee think of whom thou
art,

And set a watch upon thy feet.' But
she,

Hating the faithful candour of the youth,
Fell into utter wretchlessness of sin ;

And when her sire, discovering her
disgrace,

Threatened her for her fault, a shame-
less thought

Seized her, and she, with feigned re-
luctancy,

Swore he deserted her, and with her
child

Came to the saintly Abbot, where he sate
Judging the brethren. And great anger
seized

The reverend man that at his heart he
nursed

A viper which thus stung him, and he
cried,

' Vile wretch, who dost disgrace our
holy house !

Thou hypocrite, soiling the spotless robe
Of saintly purity ! I do denounce

Thy wickedness. No longer canst
thou be

A brother to thy brethren here, who
live

Pure lives unstained. My sentence on
thee is

That thou be scourged, and from this
reverend house

Go forth in shame, and work what viler
work

The brethren find for thee ; and this
poor child

Take thou with thee, and look that thou
maintain

Its growing life, since thus thy duty
bids thee.

Or if my mercy spare thee from the
stripes

Thou hast deserved, 'tis for its sake, not
thine.

Go, get thee gone, and never dare again
Pollute my presence.'

Long she strove to speak,
But her lips formed no word. And
then she rose

Meekly, and, answering no word, went
forth,

Bowed down with shame, and yet not
ill content,

Deeming it but the penance which her
sins

Had merited. And when the little one
Stretched forth its hands, she clasped it
to her breast,

Her virgin breast, and all the sacred
glow

Of motherhood, which lurks within the
hearts

Of innocent maidens, rising soothed her
pain ;

And, wandering forth, she found some
humble hut

For shelter. There by alms and servile
tasks,

'Mid great despite of all who knew her
once

In days of honour ; hungry, lonely,
poor,

And oft-times begging bread, she pined
long time,

Till the young life Heaven gave her,
throve and grew

In happy innocence, and all who passed

Might hear twin voices mingling in the
hymns—

The father's, who was mother, and the
child's—

And wondering went their way.

So that pure soul
Grew tranquil, even on earth. Yet in
her heart

Deep down the rankling sorrow dwelt,
and burned

The sources of her being, and sometimes
Her penance grew too hard, and almost
broke

The bonds of silence ; then again her
soul

Took courage, persevering to the end,
Knowing her sins, and how the pain
she bore,

Though undeserved, was nothing to the
sum

Of her offence, dear heart ! and hoping
from it

The fair reward of utter faithfulness.

But not the less the insults and the
shame

Consumed her life and strength, and
day by day,

When now the innocent she loved had
grown

To happy childhood, weaker and more
weak,

Her failing forces waned, till on her bed
Stretched helpless lay the maid. And
when she knew

Her hour was come, she summoned to
her side

An aged woman whom she knew of
yore,

What time she seemed a frank and eager
youth,

Ere her shame took her ; and when she
was come,

Quickly with trembling hand she
beckoned her,
Giving her charge, when she was dead,
to take
Her child to the good brethren, with
her prayer
That they should keep it safe

Then with weak hand
She bared her innocent virgin breast
and smiled,
A sad wan smile, and, looking up to
Heaven,
Breathed her last breath.

And she who saw, amazed,
With mingled joy and tears, composed
with care

The virgin limbs, and wrapped her in
her shroud,

And hasting to the convent with the
child

Left orphan, told the tale. And when
he heard,

The holy Abbot knelt with bitter grief
All night before the altar, asking grace
Of Heaven, that he had wronged that
saintly soul

By base suspicion; and the brotherhood
Bewailed the pure girl-saint, who bore
so long

In blessed silence taunts and spite and
shame,

Obedient and in great humility."

And then it was a saint, still, as it
seemed,

Clad in monastic habit,—many a hand
Of painter limns him—with dark beard
and hair

And melancholy eyes. Full well I knew
The worn ascetic figure, bearing with it

The lily and the lamb; the tearful gaze
Which wept the sad world's sin, while
the high voice

Sang praise for all; the poet-monk
who lit

Of his seraphic ardour the faint fires
And embers of the Faith. And thus I
heard:

"To wealthy Bernardone and his wife,
Madonna Pica, seven long centuries
since,

In fair Assisi, on the Umbrian hills,
Was born a son, Giovanni, whom his
fellows,

Because he loved the joyous tongue of
France,

Would call 'Francesco.' Thence has
come a name

Through every Christian realm resound-
ing still,

Beloved for ever, and the ear which
hears

'S. Francis of Assisi' knows it takes
A name in which all saintly memories
Are stored as in a precious vase ful-
filled

Of spikenard, and the faithful listening
soul

Rejoices at its sound and is content.

Now, when the boy had come to youth-
ful years,

Being his father's son, rich in all store
Of gay attire, and filled with pride of
life

And luxury, yet would his generous
heart

Stand at the gate of pity, prompt to
give

If any asked; so that the citizens
Loved the gay, careless youth for all
his faults.

Till, when he grew a stripling, a fierce
feud

Between Assisi and her sister town
Of high Perugia, raging, burst in war;
And the young Bernardone, with the
rest,

Bare arms, and, being taken, twelve
long months

Lay prisoner in the fortress. When the
strife

Was done and he set free, the burning
grasp

Of fever seized him, and he pined long
weeks

And months upon his bed. There, as
he lay

Hovering 'twixt life and death, his
sobered thought

Turned oft to Heaven, and all his reck-
less youth

Stood up accusing, and a great con-
tempt

For this poor fleeting world and all its
joys

Filled his reviving life, and crowned
his years

With grave and sudden manhood; and
he rose

Leaving his former self, a higher hope
Firing his soul than those low aims of
yore.

Yet outwardly he kept his wonted use
Of splendour, and among the admiring
throng

Of his dear town he seemed to fare as
erst

A glittering youth, though 'neath his
costly robe

He bore a painful garment, till one
day,

Meeting some poor and humble way-
farer.

He knew a noble comrade who had
served

With bravery in the war, leading the
van

With glory, but whom now some sudden
spite

Of Fortune left a beggar. When he
saw

The honoured face seamed with the
lines of want

And hunger, and the noble form
obscured

By rags and penury, the love of God—
Which is the love of man—rose up
aflake

Within his breast, and hurriedly he
stripped

His broidered velvets from him, cloth-
ing round

The naked, as his Lord commanded
him,

And with the beggar left his purse, and
took

His rags, and through the thronged
street passed unmoved,

Rapt by an ecstasy of sacrifice,

And gained his home, a beggar in men's
sight,

But wealthy in the love of God and
man.

Thence ever in his breast the fire of
faith

Burned higher, till one day, within the
shrine

Of San Damiano praying, where he
mourned

The high church half in ruin; as he
knelt,

There spake within his soul a voice,
which said,

'Build thou My falling Church.' And
he who heard,

Deeming it was the ruin where he knelt
 The strange voice bade him build,
 turning in haste
 To seek his father's house, sold of their
 store,
 And brought the priests the gold. But
 when his sire
 Was angered for the thing, he fled in
 fear,
 Doubting if he had heard the voice
 aright,
 Which bade him build the Church of
 God indeed,
 Not one poor tottering shrine; and
 when he came,
 After long days, worn, pale, in evil
 case,
 And hungry, all the people deemed the
 youth
 A madman, and his father prisoned him
 Within his house long time. But she,
 his mother,
 The mild Madonna Pica, came to him,
 And comforted her son, bidding him
 yield
 Obedience to his sire. Yet, though he
 loved
 His gentle mother well, the fire of faith
 Burned bright within him, and he
 spurned the world
 And its poor wealth. And when his
 sire at last,
 Being a worldling wholly, summoned
 him
 Before the Bishop, presently his son,
 Kneeling before the holy man, flung
 down
 His costly robe, as one who cast away
 All worldly wealth, and all the ties of
 earth,
 And gave himself to Heaven. And
 there he lay
 Naked, except his painful vest of hair,

Until the old man, shedding grateful
 tears
 Of tenderness, stooped down and gently
 raised
 The suppliant, and round his young
 limbs cast
 His own white robe; and thenceforth
 the young life
 Died to the world, and lived for Heaven
 alone.

 Thus the swift years passed by and left
 him, man.
 And turning to the sick and leprous
 lives,
 He spent himself in pity; and found
 peace
 In happy daily labour, till his soul
 Filled with the bliss of living, and his joy
 And thankfulness and praise burst forth
 in song,
 As o'er the sunburned Umbrian hills he
 fared,
 He and his chosen Brother, year by
 year.
 Summer and winter, when the high-
 built town
 Glimmered in early dawn, and the thin
 towers
 Gleamed mistlike; or when now a
 golden rose
 Of sunset woke them, as it wakes to-day
 His high arcades, his convent cells,
 where towers,
 Leaving the files of sombre cypress-
 spires,
 Church over church; or when the
 valleys slept
 In twilight, and the shrill cicale chirped
 Among the olives, and the passionate
 song
 Of nightingales, from every bush and
 grove,

Throbb'd liquid through the gloom ;
 then would his voice
 Rise clear to Heaven, and these the
 words he sang :

'Almighty Lord Most High, to Thee
 belong
 Glory and honour, and to none beside ;
 No soul there is worthy to name Thy
 Name.

'I praise Thee for Thy creatures, oh
 my God,
 And specially for him who gives us
 Day,
 The Sun, my brother ; radiant is his
 face,
 And in his light we see Thy image,
 Lord.

'I praise Thee, Lord, because Thy
 hand has made
 The Moon, my sister, and the countless
 host,
 In shining mail, which fills the lucid
 heavens.

'I praise Thee for my brothers, Thy
 great Winds,
 For Air and Cloud, Thy Heavens
 serene, and all
 Thy seasons which give sustenance to
 men.

'I praise Thee for my sister, the bland
 force
 Of Water, who, to serve the needs of
 men,
 Yields without stint her chaste and
 precious power.

'I praise Thee for my strenuous brother
 Fire,

By whose brave aid Thou dost illumine
 the night ;
 Jocund and fair is he, unquenched and
 strong.

'I praise Thee for our bounteous mother
 Earth,
 Who keeps and nourishes our race,
 and gives
 A thousand kindly fruits to cheer our
 lives,
 Sweet flowers of varied hues, and every
 herb.

'I praise Thee for the souls which, for
 Thy love,
 Forgiving evil, sorrow bear and pain ;
 Blessed are they who meekly take Thy
 cross,
 And gain, oh Thou Most High ! to
 wear Thy crown.

'I praise Thee for our sister bodily
 Death,
 Whom none who live and breathe shall
 'scape at last.
 Woe, woe to them who die in mortal
 sin !
 But blest are they, oh Lord, who do
 Thy Will ;
 They shall not dread the great, the
 second Death.

'Thy Name, dear Lord, let all men
 praise and bless,
 And serve Thee still in utter humble-
 ness !'

Thus in an ecstasy of faith he lived,
 Begging his bread long time ; for all
 his wealth
 He gave to build the churches which
 he loved,

And in his narrow cell below the hill
On which Assisi towers, hard by the
shrine,

Our Lady of the Angels, happy years
He dwelt and pondered, till at length
he knew

His mission to the world, to preach, to
call

All people to new life, speaking the
words

God gave him, not his own. And
everywhere

There came a blessing on his work,
and men

And pious women listened, and his
words

Burned like a fire within their hearts.
And last

At Rome, the Pontiff, wondering at a
dream,

Wherein the pilgrim, of his strength,
upheld

The tottering Church, confirmed his
saintly Rule ;

And he, with joyful heart returning,
sought

His lowly cell, and gathered round him
all

His Brethren of the Faith, and there
he spent

Long happy years of blessed Poverty.

Likewise, because for faithful souls the
lot

Of God's dumb creatures presses with a
weight

Of wonder whence they come, and for
what end,

These humble helpers of our race, to
whom

Their master is as God, or how the
doom

Of nothingness awaits at last their good

And honourable service ; and because,
Loving his Lord, he loved all creatures
too

His hand had fashioned ; worm and
creeping thing

Upon his path he crushed not, but
would set

In safety ; and the joyous songs of
birds,

The soaring lark, the passionate nightin-
gale,

He knew for hymns of praise, and oft
would join

His jubilant voice with theirs. Around
his feet,

As in the fields he walked, the innocent
lambs

Would gambol, and the timid fur-clad
things

Nestled within his bosom, fearing not
His gentle hand. But most of all the
birds

He loved, the swift-winged messengers
who pass

'Twixt earth and Heaven, and seem as
if they bear

A double nature, close in brotherhood
With all he loved ; and when he heard
their song,

Pierced through with joy and utter
thankfulness,

He with alternate praise would join
with them,

And once, with soaring antiphons at eve,
Vied with a nightingale, till the brief
night

Was well-nigh spent, and he could sing
no more,

Since his voice failed him. And he
bade the blithe

Cicale chirping in the acacia thus,
'Sing, sisters ; praise the Lord ;' and
hearing him,

They shrilled their answering song, and
he was glad.

And one, the foremost of his band,
there was,

The Lady Clara, then and now a
saint.

She with the Master lived in grave dis-
course

And holy converse, and one day it
seemed,

When at their frugal meal upon the
grass

She, with her sisters, sate around the
saint,

He with such sweet discourse declared
the Faith,

That they forgot their food and paused
to take

The spiritual feast, with eyes and hearts
Raised up to Heaven ; and all the folk
around

Marked how the convent and the low
church gleamed

With light which shone like fire, and,
hasting there,

Found the saints wrapt in silent musing
thought,

Forgetful of their meal, and knew the
light

Was but the fire divine of Faith, which
burned

Within those saintly hearts, and to their
homes

Turned wondering.

But while he lived serene,
Dissolved in happy tears, his soul
desired

The martyr's blessed palm, and fain
would go

Forth to the Paynim host, which then
bore rule

O'er all the sacred fields of Palestine ;

But a storm drove him back. Then to
the Moor

He yearned to preach ; but grievous
sickness came,

And stayed his feet. Last, by the fabled
Nile,

He gave his body to burn if they would
take

The Faith of Christ ; but when the
Moslem heard,

Deeming such sacrifice too great for
man,

He sent him home with honour. Not
for him

The martyr's palm, but to build up the
Church

By years of labour crowned with saintly
death.

Thus ten years passed, and then upon
the plain

Around his cell the Brethren of his Rule
In thousands flocked from every Chris-
tian land,

And by his triple Vow of Poverty,
Obedience, Chastity, bound fast their
lives,

As the saint bade them, and to every
clime

Went forth his envoys. He it was who
first,

A rapt ascetic, with foreseeing mind,
Brought to the service of the Faith the
lives

Whose path lay through the world, and
the fresh zeal

Of Woman, from the peasant to the
Queen.

Long from his place he governed far
and wide

His nascent Order, till at last, his soul
Grown sick for Heaven and heavenly
thoughts, he passed,

Far from his brethren and the praise of
men,

To some lone cell on the precipitous
side

Of blue Alverno, high above the vale,
Above the winding river, above the
heights

Of white Assisi, where his failing sight
Might rest upon the everlasting hills.

There, in rapt contemplation and fair
dreams,

He spent his soul.

There, year by rapturous year,
The heavens stood open to his gaze ;
the face

Of the Madonna, with the Child Divine,
Beamed on him. There the blessed
Presence filled

His yearning eyes. There, in an ecstasy
'Twas said, the failing body, strong in
love,

Like the pure soul cleansed from her
earthy stains,

Took his dear Master's wound, and
bore again

The Passion ; and the inmost Heaven,
unsealed,

Opening disclosed the Angelic Host and
all

The glories else unseen by mortal eye,
Till, in seraphic ardour, the saint's soul,
Throbbing with bliss well-nigh too
great for earth,

Wore thin the walls of life, and sickness
came,

And weakness, and his eyes grew dim
with tears—

Tears not of sorrow all, but mixt with
joy

For those his happy visions ; tears of
pain

For the world's sin ; tears of a faithful
hope

For Heaven and all the blessedness to
be.

There, when he knew his end draw
nigh, he hailed

The coming freedom ; and, because his
soul

Was humble, ordered that his dust
should rest

Where, mouldering in unconsecrated
ground,

The malefactors lay. Then, with weak
voice,

Bidding them set him on the sweet bare
earth

Beneath the evening sky, he murmured
low

The Imploring Psalm, ' To Thee, Lord,
have I cried ;

Thou art my hope ; ' and struggling to
the close,

' Bring my soul out of prison, ' straight-
way breathed

His last pure breath.

Then those who loved him bare
His body to the tomb. And when they
passed

By San Damiano, all the sorrowing
nuns,

S. Clara and her sisters, weeping, knelt
And kissed his hands ; and that dis-
honoured grave,

Since there a saint slept in the peace of
Heaven,

Grew honoured for all time and con-
secrate.

And over him they built a stately church,
Wherein, beneath a costly pillared
shrine

Of jasper and of sardonyx, he waits,
Who was so poor in life, the Judgment
Day,

And named it by his name ; and there,
 hard by,
 They reared a stately convent of his
 Rule ;
 And church and convent, of the loving
 skill
 Of painters whom the Faith's reviving
 fire
 Kindled to Art, glow with celestial hues
 Of beauty. There the archaic simple
 hand
 Of Cimabue wrought. There Giotto
 dreamt
 His saintly stories, only part of earth,
 While the stern Bard of Heaven and
 Hell stood near
 With counsel, honouring the name he
 deemed
 'A sunrise on the world.' There,
 quaintly true,
 Orcagna, Cavallini, Gozzoli,
 Light the rich walls. There blooms the
 stainless thought
 Of the Angelic Brother, and the pure
 Rapture of Perugino, and the soul
 Hereared, the wonder and despair of Art,
 Raffaele, and a throng of names in-
 spired
 Who sought not fame of men. And
 compassed round
 By those high glories lies the sacred dust
 Of him who, wedding saintly Poverty,
 Lived there long time despised, though
 now he soars
 Higher than earthly thrones, a Saint in
 Heaven."

Next came a queenly, youthful figure,
 clad
 In the Franciscan garb, a slender form

With dark-brown hair and eyes, whose
 lap was filled
 With roses white and red, like those
 which crowned,
 In token of her purity and love,
 The brow of Cecily. Great tender-
 ness
 And pity beamed from out her saintly
 eyes,
 And, kissing as she went, her stainless
 robe,
 Knelt many a soul her faithful voice
 and hand
 Had raised from earth to Heaven. As
 she came
 This fair half-legendary tale I heard :

"To Andreas of Hungary the Queen,
 His consort, seven long centuries ago,
 Bore one fair daughter. All the realm
 that year
 Was free from war, a bounteous harvest
 blessed
 The peaceful land, and with her came
 a saint
 To bless the Church of God.
 From her first years
 Saintly she showed and meek ; no
 childish tear
 Of petulance she shed, and when she
 spake
 Her speech was as a prayer. All the
 broad plain
 Of Hungary rejoiced to see her grow
 Prudent as fair, and through the land
 the fame
 Of her young goodness spread and
 made men glad.

Now, when King Herman, of Thu-
 ringia, learned
 This prodigy, he sent an embassy
 To Hungary to ask of Andreas

His daughter in betrothal for his son
 Prince Lewis, and the messengers re-
 turned
 And brought the child with them, and,
 with her, store
 Of costly stuffs and jewels the far East
 And rich Byzantium yielded. And the
 King
 Loved the child well, and with her love
 she lived,
 Brother and sister ; and her youthful
 heart
 Was filled with Heaven, and every day
 that came
 Brought its fair tale of saintly sacrifice,
 And more and more for God and in
 His fear
 She lived her girlish life, filling her days
 With pity and compassion, till she
 showed
 As 'twere some sweet child-angel whom
 the hand
 Of a great painter limns. Not as a
 child
 Of this poor trivial world she seemed,
 but grave,
 As one who strayed from Heaven to
 earth and found
 No meet companion. But the Prince
 loved well
 His young betrothed, albeit well he saw
 She was not as the rest, fearing some-
 times
 Lest she might choose to be the Bride
 of Heaven,
 And not for him. Yet, while the good
 King lived,
 None dared to thwart the young
 Elizabeth
 In any work of pity, nor might the
 tooth
 Of envy touch her. But when death
 cut short

His life, the stranger, now a friendless
 maid,
 Dwelt long forlorn, because the jealous
 Queen
 And her proud daughter Agnes, envying
 Her saintly life, with scoffs and jeers
 would mock
 Her sacrifice, and deepest contumely,
 So that her young and modest soul
 would shrink
 Within her at the cruel daily taunts
 Which marred her life ; and all the
 courtly throng
 Marked her disgrace, and mocked her ;
 and her sister,
 The Princess Agnes, jealous of her
 love,
 Would wring her heart, declaring that
 her brother
 Wanted no nun for bride, but would
 dismiss her
 To Hungary in shame. Such rankling
 shafts
 Of venom launched they as the poisoned
 tongue
 Of envious women can ; and she, alone,
 Unfriended, bare it, nor complaining
 word
 Would speak to her betrothed, who
 marked it all
 In silence, nor yet spake, being indeed
 A youth as yet in tutelage, who owed
 Obedience to the Queen, doubting,
 maybe,
 Within his inmost heart if this pure
 soul
 Were not too high for earth and earthly
 love.
 But not the less his faithful love and
 trust
 Sustained her soul. No public word
 he spake

Of comfort, but ofttimes, when she
 would sit
 In tears within her chamber, sick at
 heart
 For the despite and bitter contumely
 The others showered on her, her youth-
 ful lover
 Would come to her, comforting her
 with words ;
 And when they were apart, his faithful
 thought
 Fixed on her still, he, coming, brought
 with him
 Some little gift she loved—a rosary
 Of beads, a silver crucifix, a chain
 Of gold in token of his love. And she,
 Loving him next to Heaven, would dry
 her tears
 And run to meet him, and throw
 girlish arms
 Around him, and would strain him to
 her heart
 And take his kisses as a maiden should
 Who loves and is beloved, and with
 good heart
 And cheerful bear her cross, nor cease
 at all
 From works of mercy, happy in her
 love.

 Now one day, as it chanced, her lover
 went
 With neighbouring princes to the chase,
 and stayed
 Longer than was his wont, and when
 he came,
 Or over-tired or busied with his guests,
 Brought not his wonted gift, nor did
 embrace
 His love with kisses ; and the jealous
 throng
 Marked him ; and she, perceiving with
 what joy

They saw his coldness, found her
 fainting heart
 Sink in her, and she sent a messenger
 Who should enquire of Lewis and his
 love.
 And when he came, he found the weary
 Prince
 Lying at rest ; and when he asked of
 him
 If he still loved the Princess, for the
 throng
 Had marked his coldness ; springing
 to his feet,
 The Prince replied, ‘Seest thou yon
 lofty hill
 Which towers above us? If it were of
 gold
 From base to peak, pure gold, Heaven
 be my witness
 I would give it all for her. I love none
 other.
 I must have my Elizabeth ; I love her
 Better than all the world.’ And then
 he drew
 A little silver mirror from his purse,
 Wrought deftly, with an image of the
 Lord,
 And sent it her for gage ; and when
 the maid
 Took it, she kissed with joy and
 reverence
 The sacred image, doubting him no
 more
 Till they were wed—he a tall, vigorous
 youth,
 Of ruddy cheek, blue eyes, and royal
 port,
 And in his speech as modest as a maid ;
 And she a budding maiden, dark of
 hair
 And eye, the large dark eye, which
 always glowed
 With inward light of love and charity,

And which great pity for the labouring
world

Ofttimes impeared with tears.

And so long time
They lived together in happy wedded
love.

But she, within her royal cloister, still
Kept her old penances, and oft at night
She left her husband while he slept,
and knelt

On the cold ground, and oftentimes she
scoured

Her tender flesh; and he, who loved
her dear,

Would chide her, but in vain. Yet
none the less

She did fulfil her lofty courtesies,

And rode out with him to the chase,
and showed

A Queen for all to see. Though when
he went

She donned a mourning weed, when
he returned

She, in her royal mantle clad, would
greet

Her spouse, and would embrace him as
he leapt

Down from his charger, every inch a
Queen,

Greeting her lord with wifely tender-
ness;

Yet when they sat at meat, 'twas bread
alone

They served to her, and in her cup
they poured

Not wine, but water only, till her
spouse

Tasting the cup one day, it seemed to
him

The water of her saintly penance
glowed

Like some celestial wine pressed from
the grapes

Of Paradise, and not a word he spake,
Because he held long time his wife was
served

By angel hands and fed on angels' food.

And one day, when her lord had made
a feast

For all his brother princes, filled with
pride

Of his fair wife, and willing that his
peers

Should judge her beauty, he gave
charge to her

That, clothed in costly robes, a Queen
to see,

She should attend the feast; and she,
who held

Obedience more than all, arrayed her-
self

In queenly garb. Upon her raven hair
She set a glittering diadem of gems,

And round her shapely form a royal
robe

Of green and gold, and o'er her fair
neck threw

An ermined mantle. As she issued
forth

From out her queenly bower to join
her lord,

Behold, a hapless beggar, spent with
cold

And hunger, met her, asking charity;

And when he prayed her, in the sacred
Name,

To succour him, she, with the holy fire
Of pity rising in her, stripped from
her

The ermine, and around the shivering
form

Wrapped it, and went, half doubting if
her spouse

Would pardon her. And when he
came, she ran

And, leaning on his bosom, told him
all ;

And while he stood irresolute, behold,
Her maiden with the mantle in her
arms.

'Madam, I found your ermine in its
place ;

Did not your Highness need it ?' Then
she clasped it

Around her ; and her husband, as he
heard,

Knew well the beggar was the Lord
of all ;

Willing to test her love and charity ;

And they together went ; and all the
guests

Marvelled to see her beauty—such a
light

Shone from her jewelled mantle, and
her head

Seemed set with glory, and her tender
eyes

Lit with the glow of Heaven and
saintly love.

And one day, when she toiled amidst
her poor

At Eisenach, she came upon a child

Outcast of all, because a loathly plague

Of leprosy possessed him, so that none

Would touch him. Straight she took
him in her arms,

Moved by a holy pity, and up the steep

Carried him to her castle, while the
throng

Of courtiers shrank from her, and in
her bed

Laid him, and tended him with saintly
love,

Despite the old Queen's anger, all
unmoved.

And when her lord returned, and they
would tell him

What they had seen, he hurried to the
place,

Half in disgust, and snatched the
coverlet

Aside ; and, lo ! no leper child was
there,

Only the childish radiant form which lay

Within the manger once at Bethlehem ;

And as they gazed the lovely vision
smiled

And faded, and was gone.

Again, one day,
When to her work she issued forth
alone

In winter down the snows, and in her
robe,

To feed the hungry, doles of meat and
bread,

Upon the frozen path she chanced to
meet

Her husband, and in jest he greeted
her.

'What dost thou here, my Elsbeth,
and what store

Lies hid within thy cloak ?' Then,
with a blush

Of modesty divine, which lit her face

With double beauty, she drew close
her robe,

Lest he should see. But he, with frolic
mirth

Persisting, drew it back, and in the
fold

He seemed to see, amid those wintry
snows,

Celestial roses red and white, which
breathed

A fragrance not of earth ; and when he
sought

To clasp her to his breast, lo ! from
her eyes

An awful radiance shone, too bright
for earth ;

And, bidding her go forward on her way,
 One heavenly bloom he took, and next his heart
 He laid it, and, with head declined, and slow,
 And pondering much, climbed to their royal home.

In such good works she spent her saintly life.
 When famine vexed the people, and her lord
 Was with his liege far off, she opened wide
 The royal granaries to save, unasked,
 Those starving lives ; and when the pestilence,
 A dread familiar following in its train,
 Seized them, her hand it was that smoothed the bed
 Of sickness, rearing costly hospices
 For all, but chiefly for the helpless pain
 Of children. When she walked among the throng,
 A tall young queenly figure breathing grace,
 The little ones would cling to her and lisp
 The sacred name of mother ; and she stooped
 And cherished them, speaking with homely words
 Of comfort, and for them she sold her robes,
 Her gems, and all the precious things she loved,
 Nay, even the jewels of the State.
 And he
 Returning, when they came and made complaint
 Of all she lavished, with a smile would say,

‘ Nay, is my dear wife well, and are they well,
 My children? Ay? Then it is well with me.
 If she but spare my castle, it is well ;
 Let her give alms.’ And she, with all her brood,
 Came forth and flung her on his breast, and kissed
 Her love, and welcomed him with tender words—
 ‘ See, I have given the Lord what is His own,
 And He preserves us these.’

Thus sped their wedded lives, till the sad year
 When, the third time, the armies of the Cross
 Sailed forth to fight the Crescent. At their head
 The Kaiser went, leading the princely throng,
 And Lewis with them. And the brave man feared
 One thing alone, to see his sorrowing wife
 Blanch at the news. Therefore the Cross he took
 Not on his breast he bore, but carried it
 Hid safe from prying eyes, because he dared not
 Witness her pain. But one fair summer eve,
 As they together sate within her bower,
 Asking of him an alms for some good end,
 Which he in jest denied, she with blithe heart
 Snatched his purse from him, and beheld within
 The Cross, and straight, knowing what thing it was,

Swooned at his feet ; and when her
life returned,
Weeping, she said, ' Dear husband,
stay with me
If God so will ; ' and he, dissolved in
tears :

' Dear wife, I dare not ; I am vowed
to Heaven.'

Then she : ' God's will be done.' And
so he went ;

And she a two days' journey fared with
him

Ere she could say ' Farewell,' nor saw
her eyes

Her love again on earth ; for when he
reached

The far Calabrian shore, burnt by the fire
Of fever, to the nobles round his bed
Commending his loved wife and chil-
dren dear,

Within the Patriarch's arms the Land-
grave died.

And she, when now the news of her
lost love

Came to her, swooned away, and lay
for dead

Long time, and at the last, a broken
heart,

Tending her infant brood, she bore to
live ;

But when her shield, her stay, her
strong support

Was taken from her, then she 'gan to
prove

The vile despite they know who find the
world,

The ungrateful world, scorning their
feebleness.

From her proud castle home they drove
her forth,

Her and her children, and, amid the
snows

Of winter, down the rocky steep they
went,

A sad procession. In her arms the
Queen

Folded her suckling child, born when
his sire

Was dying far away, and with her went
Three faithful ladies, bearing each a
child,

Seeking some hind's poor hut ; and as
they went

Down the rough slippery way, her
weary feet

Stumbling, upon the ground she lay,
and then

A thing in shape of woman, whom her
hand

Tended through sickness, mocked her
as she fell.

Yet not the less her sweet and patient
spirit

Was all unmoved to wrath ; and, having
found

Some humble shelter, day by day she
wrought

At spinning for her children, whom her
skill

Furnished with food and clothing, till
the knights

From the Crusade returning, set her boy
Upon his father's throne, and gave to
her

Marbourg for dower, where with her
girls she dwelt

Long unmolested.

But a pitiless man,
Conrad the priest, within whose bigot
soul

Pity nor mercy dwelt ; whether to make
Her life one penance, that he might
increase

His baleful power o'er that pure heart,
or else

Wishing to set her name among the
 saints,
 And his the honour, laid upon her soul
 Penance too hard to bear. He took
 from her
 Her children one by one, lest too much
 love
 Might hinder her from Heaven. He
 took from her
 The one delight of giving, which grows
 strong
 With waning life ; and when she fain
 would take
 The vows of San Francesco, and would
 beg
 Her bread throughout the world, this
 too forbade ;
 And when, with clothing torn and
 things of shreds,
 She, who was once a queen, through
 her own town
 Wandered, the children of her loving
 care
 Mocked her as one demented. Yet
 she bore
 All this and worse, meek and without
 complaint,
 Until the pious seemed to see once
 more
 The lowly Clara and revered a saint.

 Yet worse than all her unearned
 penances,
 The tooth of slander would invade her
 peace ;
 And she, the saintly lady whose white
 life
 Was all of Heaven, leaving within the
 grave
 All earthly love, knew as a worldling
 might
 The breath of shame—she whose fair
 delicate flesh

Was scarred with lashes which the
 fanatic rage
 Of the dark bigot wreaked on her.
 And yet
 Her cup of suffering was not full ; but
 last
 The dark priest took from her the faith-
 ful hearts
 Who, knowing her in honour, were
 content
 To cleave to her disgrace, and in their
 stead
 Sent two base creatures, who should
 make her drain
 Dishonour to the dregs, forbidding her
 The alms she loved, or that which was
 indeed
 Her second nature—her unsparing work
 Among the poor and sick. No marvel
 then
 That, ere her morning broadened into
 noon,
 Her great compassion, languishing and
 pent
 Like an undying fire within her soul,
 Burned with a quenchless longing, and
 consumed
 Her tender youth, which all her pains
 and stripes,
 The scourge of slander, nay, her dead
 love's loss,
 Slew not ; or that her life, laid on a bed
 Of suffering, day by day waned low and
 lower,
 Nor ever again revived, but sank at last
 In that thick darkness which we christen
 Death.

 And when upon her bed she came to
 die,
 Being but four and twenty summers old,
 When she had lain twelve days or more,
 they heard

Who tended her, a sweet and soaring strain
 Sound from her lips, as to the wall she turned
 Her wasted face. All her last day on earth
 She strove in prayer, till by the mystic food
 Her listening ear, enfranchised, seemed to hear
 Voices of angels, and the Mother of God
 In converse with her, and the sound of hymns
 Sweeter than any sounds of earth ; and last,
 When now her strength had failed, one word she spake :
 ' Silence ! '—no more, as one who fain would hear
 The heavenly quires ; and then she made response,
 ' Contempsi regnum mundi Domine.'
 And then the voices ceased, and she with them
 Closed her pure saintly life.
 And round her bed
 The people gathered, mourning, bathed in tears.
 Four days she lay unburied in the midst,
 While the crowd knelt and kissed.
 And on the site
 Of her poor home they reared the stately Church
 Of S. Elizabeth, and her shrine within,
 Built high on steps worn hollow by the knees
 Of countless pilgrims since, until the storm
 Of revolution burst, and violated
 Those sacred walls, and one of her own blood,
 The Landgrave Philip, came with impious hand

And razed the shrine, and scattered far and wide
 The relics of the saint ; and no man knows
 Their resting-place, but her soul rests with God."

Thus he ; and then, with graver thought and voice,
 My soul within me burst in words and cried,
 " ' Be good, be good ! '—this is the word that Heaven
 Proclaims, not ' happy ; ' or if happiness
 Come, ' tis despite the pain the careless world
 Wreaks upon finer souls. Here there is strife,
 Injustice, suffering, and the cruel sense
 Of failure, when the victor's palm, indeed,
 Is theirs to claim. Death comes and takes our lives
 With half our work undone, and Faith itself
 Breeds its own errors and misguides the soul,
 And all our happiness seems sunk in night,
 Till the Great Dawn arising brings with it
 New heavens and new earth."

Then a form meek
 And pitiful, in manhood's early prime,
 With mild soft eyes, who wore the pilgrim's garb,

The scallop in his hat, the staff, the scrip,
The wallet, and yet seemed a noble still
For all his poverty; and my guide said—

“In Languedoc, of noble parents came,
When thirteen centuries were passed
from Christ,
A youth, who bore upon his breast
from birth,
Symbol of dedication to the Faith,
A tiny cross. Him with all pious care
His mother, Libera, for works of good
And sanctity, through all his glowing
youth,
Trained year by year; and on his soul
he bore
The cross, as on his breast, and gave
his life,
His heart, his all, to Heaven.

But not with him
The pale ascetic fervours of the cell,
Nor cloistered virtues lived apart from
men,
Where the rapt soul communes alone
with God,
Prevailed; but life lived as his Master's
erst,
Among the poor and weak, healing the
sick,
And filled with pity for the fallen lives
Of sinners, raising them to light and
hope—
Life spending happy, and laborious
days,
Each bringing something of accom-
plished good,
And sinking at its close in well-earned
rest;—
'Twas this blest lot he prized.

Thus, all his youth
He lived in innocence. But ere he
reached

The gate of early manhood, Death,
which comes
To rich and poor, took from him at a
blow
His father's guiding hand, his mother's
prayers,
And he, an orphan, rich in lands and
gold,
Was left to work what work was his,
alone

Then with no pause of doubt, knowing
the words
Of his dear Master, and remembering
well
His answer to the youth who, rich as he,
Would fain obey, straightway he
gathered all
His wealth, and of it to the poor and
weak
Gave part in alms, and of the rest he
reared
Hospices for the sick, wherein the skill
Of wise physicians, working under
Heaven,
Might heal them; and he donned a
pilgrim's garb,
And then on foot, obscure, like any hind,
Painful with staff and wallet toiled to
Rome.

But when his feet had left the Alpine
snows,
Crossing the Lombard plain, one eve,
he climbed,
Through groves of oak, to where, its
slender towers
Dark on the twilight glow, throbbing
with noise
Of loud-tongued waters hurrying to the
plain,
By Orvieto's city and sacred shrine,
Acquapendente hung. But as he came,

The nameless dread of some invisible
 ill,
 The unguarded city gates, the tolling
 knells,
 The sick and dying cumbering the ways
 With none to aid, the still, deserted
 streets,
 The sullen silence echoing cries of pain
 From the blind, close-shut dwellings,
 smote on him
 With a strange pity, and he hastened on.
 And when he asked of one who fled,
 what ill
 Befell the town, "The plague!" he
 cried, "the plague!
 Fly too, or thou art doomed." But
 he who heard,
 Without a moment's doubt, filled with
 great ruth
 And eagerness, pressed onward, as a
 player
 Who knows and loves his part, and
 round his feet
 Dread signs of death and suffering
 everywhere
 Grew thicker, till at length he gained
 the gate
 Of the great hospice, thronged from
 floor to roof
 With hopeless pain. Then, in an
 ecstasy,
 He entered, and besought that he
 might serve;
 And they consenting, he, with fervent
 prayer
 And great compassion, and the finer
 skill
 Which Faith can breed, and comfort-
 able words,
 And signing with the Cross where'er
 he came,
 Heartened those helpless sufferers in
 such sort

That many, whom now the instant
 might of Death
 Held in its grasp, escaped; and
 presently,
 The fierce infection waning, all the land
 Revered the youth, so young, so beauti-
 ful,
 So fearless and devoted, and they grew
 To hold him more than man, till to
 their thought
 He showed as 'twere an angel sent
 from Heaven
 To bid them live.
 Thence fared he through the land
 Of the Romagna. There by field and
 town
 Was pestilence, and he was in the midst,
 Dauntless amid the harm, tending the
 sick,
 Himself unscathed. And thence to
 Rome herself,
 Where too was plague; there three
 long years he wrought
 'Mid scenes of death and pain, tending
 the sick,
 Always unscathed, and wheresoe'er he
 went
 A blessing went with him upon his work.
 Yet one incessant prayer his faithful
 lips
 Would breathe to Heaven, if only he
 might earn
 The martyr's palm: but never at all
 there came
 An answer to his prayer, nor could he
 die,
 Nor be at rest, for God had need of him.
 Thus, year by year, from town to
 suffering town
 He journeyed, still unscathed, rapt by
 good works

Of mercy: At the last his footsteps
came

To fair Piacenza, where a dreadful ill
Consumed the people. There long
time he served,

Tending the sick. There, too, a
blessing came

Upon his work, till one sad night he
sank,

O'ercome by toil and watching, on the
ground ;

And when he woke, a burning fever
raged

Through every vein, and on his breast,
behold,

A horrible tumour. Then, because his
pain

Had grown too great for silence, and
he feared

To wake the suffering sleepers, he
crawled forth

And laid him down to die ; and when
the guard,

Fearing the plague, constrained him,
slowly crept,

Tottering in pain, upon his pilgrim's
staff,

Beyond the city gates, to a thick wood
Where no man came, and there pre-
pared to die.

But not yet came his Fate, for some
poor hind

Succoured him, and would dress his
wound and bring

His daily food, or, as some tell, there
came

A bright angelic form to comfort him,
And he was healed ; and when his
strength returned,

Exulting in his soul that he was found
Worthy to suffer for his Lord, and
filled

With holy pride, he rose and took his
way

Across the swelling Apennines, the
plains,

The Alpine snows, clad in his pilgrim's
garb,

A worn and weary man, bent by long
toil

And wan from mortal sickness, till he
gained

His own fair native land ; and to a
town

Which was his own, and all the country
folk

His vassals born, he came, so changed
and bent

By long and suffering years, no living
eye

Knew him, and 'midst the people who
were his

The pilgrim walked unknown who was
their lord.

And he, because he scorned to take
again

His lordly rank, but rather chose to be
In great humility and serve unknown

The suffering race of men, would speak
no word

Of recognition, but, a stranger still,
Passed through the country side, nor
claimed his own,

Loving the saintly poverty which
brought

His soul to God, and set him free to
move

Lowly amongst the lowly, doing good.

Then, since great strifes and bitter
jealousies

Vexed all the country side, the folk who
deemed

His pilgrim's robe no other than a cloak

To hide the traitor, haled him to the
 judge,
 His father's brother. No defensive
 word
 He spoke, nor knew his kinsman, whom
 he doomed
 To lifelong prison. And the pilgrim,
 glad
 Of salutary pain, and holding all
 Was of God's will—the judge's ignor-
 ance
 Of his own blood, and all his punish-
 ment—
 Kept silence till the end, and to his cell
 And chains went silently, who for a
 word
 Had been set free with honour. There
 he pined,
 In a close dungeon pent, long weary
 years,
 Leaving his fate to Heaven.

And when his hour
 Was come, the jailor, taking to his cell
 His bread and water, found the
 prisoner lie
 Dead on his pallet, and around his
 head
 And from his wasted face a glory shone
 Which lit the gloom, and by his side a
 scroll,
 Writ by what hand none knew:
 "Whoever dreads
 The pestilence that stalketh through
 the night
 Shall seek the intercession of the saint
 Who lies here dead—Roch, Lord of
 Langedoc.

Then in a moment, looking on the face
 Of the worn pilgrim-prisoner dead and
 cold,
 They knew again the ardent, generous
 youth

Who, gay with robes of price and gems
 and gold,
 In the first bloom of manhood, beamed
 on them
 And gave up all for Heaven, and tender
 ruth
 For dim afflicted lives whom the hard
 fate
 Of hopeless sickness took. And so
 their eyes
 Were opened, and the judge, his kins-
 man, wept
 His hapless fate, stricken with a deep
 remorse
 For what had been; and, touched with
 vain regret,
 His vassals laid him in a costly tomb
 With tears and lamentations; and they
 thought
 That from the sacred relics of the
 dead,
 As when he lived, there went a virtue
 forth
 In plague and sickness, so that still he
 seemed
 To heal them.
 And when now a century passed,
 The strong sons of the Mistress of the
 seas,
 Who languished oft beneath the dread-
 ful scourge
 The seething Orient bred, sailed out
 and snatched
 His sacred dust, and forth, with pious
 care
 And honour, all the fairy city came
 To meet them; and above him,
 presently,
 They reared a church in honour of the
 saint
 San Rocco, and a pitiful Brotherhood,
 Named by his name, to aid the poor
 and sick,

Wherein the proudest noble joyed to
serve—

The Scuola di San Rocco,—and a house
Stately as any which the enchanted sea
Exhales in dreaming Venice. There
the skill

Of Tintoretto and his scholars limned
On wall and ceiling stories of our Lord,
His Death, and his Ascension to the
skies,

With lavish hand, so that it glows to-
day

A miracle of Art, which fitly frames
A statue of the saint; and there he
stands,

As stands his soul, among the heavenly
host,

In honour now, who died a prisoner
here.”

Next 'twas a woman, bearing in her
hand

A lily. Round her maiden limbs she
drew

The habit of S. Dominic. Her worn
face

Bore anxious traces still, as that of
one

Whom, loving best the cloister, the sad
world

Calls to its service and denies to
Heaven;

And I bethought me of a cloudless noon
By Fonte Branda, 'mid the merry talk
Of thirsty peasants, while the churches
towered

High on the rocky spurs, and her low
home

Showed like a sacred shrine, where the
saint once

Doubted herself, not God. And thus
the voice:

“In fair Siena, on the Tuscan hills,
Giacomo Benincasa lived and died
Five centuries ago. To him were
born,

And his wife Lapa, many stalwart sons
And fair-grown daughters. One, their
dearest child,

Was Catharine, latest born and best
beloved,

So fair, so blithe, so sweet in infancy,
The neighbours named her name
Euphrosyne.

But as she grew, no longer the young
maid

Showed as her comrades, but the world
unseen

Made grave her gaze and checked the
innocent flow

Of girlish laughter, and the pictured
tales

Of saintly lives within the incensed
gloom

Of the great churches drew her childish
feet

With a strange charm. For one day,
as she came,

Being but seven summers in the world,
She and her brother, from some natal
feast,

They sate at sunset on the rocky hill
By Fonte Branda, and as Catharine
gazed

On the tall campanile of the church
Above her, lo! beyond the slender
shaft,

The heavens stood open, and her
wondering gaze

Saw our dear Lord in glory, and the
saints

Around Him. As she looked upon the
 sight
 In ecstasy, her eyes grew fixed, and she
 Gazed on, unconscious that her brother's
 voice
 Called to unheeding ears ; and when
 he turned
 And drew her from her place, she saw
 no more
 The opened heavens, and, sobbing from
 her heart,
 Sank on the ground with bitter childish
 tears.

 Nor ever from her thought the wondrous
 dream
 Of that blest evening faded. More and
 more
 Silent she grew, and grave, and wan-
 dered forth
 In solitude, if haply once again
 That glorious vision took her longing
 eyes ;
 But never more it came. But she, who
 read
 The tale of Catharine and the sponsal
 ring
 Which bound her to the Lord, prayed
 if perchance
 She also might be His ; and when she
 came
 To her full age, being sweet and beau-
 tiful,
 Her parents, loving not her penances,
 Her fasts, her vigils, her ascetic dreams,
 Would give their girl in marriage ; but
 her soul,
 Fixed on that heavenly bridal, took no
 thought
 For earthly love, and still her days were
 spent
 In solitary prayer. Then, that hard
 toil

Might check her wandering dreams,
 her parents laid
 Hard household tasks upon her, load-
 ing her
 With mean and weary toils, and all the
 house
 Mocked her and jeered ; but in her
 heart she kept
 This comfort—' Were not, then, the
 blessed saints
 Mocked even as I, and shall I be
 ashamed
 To bear as they did ? ' To her humble
 tasks
 She bent her unrepining ; food and rest
 Almost she took not, yielding place to
 prayer ;
 And, lest her fairness might allure the
 eyes
 Of youthful lovers, from her shapely
 head
 Sheared the luxuriant treasure of her
 hair,
 To lay before the altar, offering all
 Her youth, her life to Heaven. Thus
 she lived
 A recluse self-ordained ; but still her
 sire
 Urged her to wed, till one day, to her
 cell
 Chancing to come, it seemed a snow-
 white dove
 Hovered above her as she knelt, and
 then
 The good man, fearing lest his will
 withstood
 The Spirit which thus visibly guided
 her,
 Entreated her no more, leaving her free
 To do Heaven's will. And to the holy
 house
 Of Dominic she went, and there she
 sought

To serve, a penitent, but never yet
 Made full profession, though she found
 no less
 A penance for herself. On a bare
 board
 She lay, a log her pillow, and no word
 For three long years she spake ; but
 from her cell
 High in her father's roof, with earliest
 dawn,
 And when the darkening ways grew dim
 with night,
 Daily she climbed the steep where the
 high Church
 Of San Domenico towered, by whose
 tall shaft
 She saw Heaven opened once, and there
 she knelt
 Before the altar rapt in ecstasy.

But not yet found she peace or rest, for
 still
 The Enemy of Man spread for her
 snares
 To take her fast. Thoughts sent her to
 her soul
 Like fiery darts, thoughts which she
 deemed of sin,
 Such as assailed the blessed Anthony.
 Or was it, surely, that to this white
 life
 The dreams of blameless love, and
 hearth and home,
 And the soft hands of children at the
 breast,
 Seemed perilous for ill? But when
 they came,
 She prayed anew for help, she took not
 food,
 She scourged herself before the altar-
 place
 Till her blood flowed. And when she
 called for aid

At midnight in the lonely church, she
 seemed
 To see a visible Presence walk with
 her,
 Speak to her words of sweetness, com-
 fort her
 As One alone might comfort, flood her
 soul
 With faith, till, as she walked, the
 darkling aisles
 Glowed with warm light, and the chill
 pavement smiled
 Decked with sweet summer flowers ;
 and evermore
 The gracious accents of a voice Divine,
 Filling her ears, made precious melody,
 Waking the ghostly solitude with sound,
 And blessed faces bent, and blest hands
 swept
 Celestial lyres unseen. And then some-
 times
 They came not, nor the Presence, and
 her soul
 Fainted within her, lest those heavenly
 dreams
 Were naught but snares, unreal fantasies
 Sent of the enemy to take her soul—
 The dreams which bind the saintly
 dreamer fast
 (Like siren voices sounding o'er the sea,
 Which whoso heard, nor fled nor stopped
 his ears,
 Lay bound for ever and lost) ; nor ever
 again
 The healthful daily load of duty done
 Allures, nor honest toil, who pines in
 chains
 Self-forged, a prisoner to his brooding
 thought.

And so she turned from penance and
 from fast
 And blessed contemplation to the tasks

Of Christian duty. To the poor and weak
 She lived a servant. One poor wretch there was,
 Sick of a hopeless ill. For her she bore
 Through wintry nights, on her bent back, the load
 Of fuel for her fire. Another, white
 With leprosy, she succoured where she lay
 Houseless without the walls. In her own bed
 She laid and tendered her, till on her hands
 The hopeless evil showed. Yet naught she earned
 Of gratitude, and when the leper died,
 She only, and none other, durst prepare
 Her corpse for burial; and, behold, her hurt
 Was cleansed from that same hour! And on a day
 When from the town she went on some soft task
 Of mercy, through the city gates there came
 A sad procession; for a robber went
 Forth to his shameful doom, rending the air
 With blasphemies and wild despairing cries,
 While in his wake the angry people surged
 With curses; and her tender saintly heart
 O'erflowed with pity, and she took her place
 Beside him, speaking with such gracious words
 That his hard heart was melted, and confessed
 His heinous sin and its just punishment.

And while she knelt in prayer, forgetting all,
 Lo! the poor penitent, 'like a gentle lamb,'
 Went tranquil to his death, and she who saw,
 Calling him 'her sweet brother,' laid his head
 Upon the block; and when the keen axe fell,
 She sate, his severed head within her hands,
 All bathed in precious blood, while her rapt eyes
 Saw the saved soul borne upward into Heaven.

In such fair works of love the virgin saint
 Spent her pure days, till through the land her fame
 Spread far and wide; and when the Florentines
 Grew rebels to the Church, the Pontiff named her
 Arbitress of the strife, confiding to her
 The terms of peace. But when she made her way
 To Florence, straight a tumult, and she hid,
 Learning too soon how base the ingrate throng,
 Within the cloister. 'Twas her voice which called
 The Holy Father home, her woman's voice—
 None other. Weighty matters of the State
 Were hers to adjudge, untrammelled, as she would;
 So that the visionary girl of yore
 Rose to the stately woman, ruling well,

As might a Queen, in honour and fame
of men.

But in the midst of all the pomp, the
glare
Of rank and power, still would her
yearning gaze
Steal backward to the days, now long
ago,

When painfully at midnight up the
steep

Her feet would climb, and in the tower-
ing church

Pour out her innocent soul, and feel
the breath

Of Love Divine upon her cheek, and
walk

Encompassed round with Heaven and
the fair dreams

Which could defy the morning and
waxed strong

Even in the blaze of noon; and she
would prize

The contemplative life, the silent
thought,

Which there she knew, above the
clamorous din

And turmoil of the world, the hopes,
the fears,

The slanderous tooth of secret enmity,
The envy of false friends. And so deep
care,

Wearing away the chains which held
her life,

Laid her at last upon her bed, and
broke,

Before her footsteps trod life's middle
way,

The silver cord, and loosed her soul to
Heaven.

But as she lay in act to die and
knew

Her end drew near, one word she
spoke alone —

'Nay, Lord, 'twas not vainglory, as
they say,

That drew me, but Thine honour, and
Thine alone ;

And thou, Lord, knowest this it was,
not pride.'

And so she passed away."

But when his voice
Was silent, all my soul broke forth in
words

Of Love which conquered Doubt.

"Dear spotless soul,
Still through thy house men go, and
wondering mark

Thy place of prayer, thy chamber, and
thy cell.

Here 'twas the Lord appeared, and
gave to thee

His sacred heart. Here, in this very
spot,

Thou clothedst Him as He sate in rags
and seemed

A beggar. All the house is filled with
thee

And the white simple story of thy life ;
Still, far above, the high church on
the hill

Towers where, in prayer, thou seemedst
to walk wrapt round

By an ineffable Presence ; thy low roof
Is grown as 'twere a shrine, where
priest and nun

And visionary girls from age to age
Throng and repeat the self-same prayers,
thyselves

Didst offer year by year.

Comes there no end
Of yearning for our race on earth, nor
stay

Of penance, nor unmingled happiness
Till Heaven is gained? or in high
 Heaven itself
Can fancy image, or can faith sustain,
No shadow, nor satiety of joy?
I cannot tell, I know not, but I know
'Tis not for happiness we are, but
 God."

And then I saw a reverend figure
 come,
Walking with meditative steps and
 slow,
Who listened as the blest Cecilia erst
To high celestial music, else unheard;
And straight I knew the Priest, from
 whose full heart
Welled a clear spring of quaint and
 sacred song,
And seemed again to tread the dewy
 meads
Of Sarum, and to see the thin spire
 pierce
The sunset skies, as I by Bemerton
Strayed rapt in thought. And as we
 passed, my guide:

"Not of one Church, or age, or race
 alone
The saints are born, nor of one clime
 they come,
But 'mid the grass-green English land-
 scapes dwell
Pure saintly souls, as by the slender
 towers
Of olive-grey Assisi, or white shrines
Washed by the purple sea. There,
 walked on earth
The saint thou seest, high of birth and
 name,

Yet lowly as his Lord, when once he
 gave
His life to Him, and with each day
 that dawned
Renewed his saintly vows, and lived
 content
For the brief years Heaven would.

 Not always turned
His soul to Heaven; the splendours
 of the Court
Dazzled his youth, and the fair bound-
 less dreams
Of youthful hope. For he, by name
 and blood
A noble, 'neath our Abbey's reverend
 shade,
Amid the cloistered courts of West-
 minster,
Drank with deep draughts the lore of
 Greece and Rome,
And then within the time-worn Halls
 which watch
The slow-paced Cam; and there his
 studious eyes
Kept nightly vigil, and his sweet shy
 Muse
Tuned her clear voice for Heaven, a
 stainless youth
Who to his loved and gracious mother
 vowed
The firstlings of his song. For him
 the flow
Of sweet concordant descants soothed
 his soul
Till Heaven stood open. But not yet
 his thought
Turned to the Altar, since in high
 respect
And favour of his king, he stayed to take
What high advancement his unwearied
 thirst
For knowledge, and his gay and
 polished wit,

Wielding the tongues of France and
 Spain, and thine,
 Great Dante, and his courtly presence
 clad
 In robes of price, might offer. Then
 at length,
 When now his growing soul grew sick
 of Courts,
 Yearning for Heaven, the hand of
 Death removed
 His potent friends, and last, the king
 himself;
 And one by one the fetters broke which
 bound
 His soul to earth, and soon he turned
 to hear
 His mother's pleading words; and,
 stronger still,
 The voice within which called him set
 him free—
 Free from himself and wholly vowed
 to God.

Then, when the courtiers scoffed at
 him and bade him
 Pursue some nobler life and worthier,
 Thus made he answer: 'Though the
 sacred name
 Of priest be now despised, yet will I
 strive
 To do it honour. All my little store
 Of learning cheerful will I yield to
 Him
 Who gave it, grieving sore I yield Him
 naught
 Who made me His. Oh, let me strive
 to be
 Likened to Him, and make Humility
 Lovely in all men's eyes, following still
 My merciful meek King.'

So he became

A servant of the Altar, for awhile
 A deacon only, fearing yet to take

The priestly office. At the last, when
 now
 His struggling years had reached life's
 midmost way,
 Whence turn our faces homewards,
 weak in frame
 Though strong in spirit, 'mid the
 golden meads
 He ministered a priest, where the gray
 spire
 Of Sarum points to Heaven, and con-
 secrates
 The rich low vale with grace. There
 he should see
 Three brief and saintly years before the
 end.

There from him all his courtly robes,
 his silks,
 His sword, he put away, and in the garb
 Of priesthood did indue himself, and
 vow
 His contrite soul to Heaven. Within
 his church,
 With all doors closed, he passed, as the
 law bade,
 To take full seisin, and, their pastor now,
 To toll, with his own hand, the bell
 which called
 The faithful. Then because he came
 not back
 After long hours, they sought him, and,
 behold,
 Through the low casement looking, saw
 the saint
 Prostrate before the altar, rapt in prayer
 For strength to do God's work; and
 there he framed
 His rule of life, and vowed to keep it
 still.

Even so the good Priest lived his tran-
 quil days,

His saintly helpmeet working with him
still
In alms and prayer. Daily the orisons
Of those pure souls, and theirs who
dwelt with them,
Three orphaned girls, rose morn and
eve to Heaven,
Following the sober uses of their
Church,
Matins and vespers. All the country
side
Loved that white life, and knelt with
reverent hearts
Whene'er within the little oratory
The daily Liturgies were sung. The
hind
Paused at his task when o'er the neigh-
bouring leas,
Summer and winter, thrilled the solemn
bell
That called the saint to prayer, and
oftentimes,
Touched by some new devouter impulse,
left
The patient oxen at the plough, and
knelt
Awhile within the reverend walls, and
took
The good man's blessing, and returned
with strength
Fresh braced for toil. Thus he, within
a realm
Whereon the coming shadow of strife
and blood,
The fanatic's guile and hate, the atheist's
sneer,
Brooded already, and the darkling
stain
Of worldly ease, and sloth, and sensual
sin,
Renewed the pure devotion of a Church
Stripped of its Pagan gauds and robed
for Heaven.

Ah ! saintly life, for which the round of
praise
And duty was enough, far from the din
And noise of Courts ; for which to
praise the Lord
And feed His helpless poor sufficed to
fill
The days with blessedness ! I hear
thee yet
Bid the poor wife who stammered forth
her need
Be of good cheer, nor fear to tell thee
all.
I see thee, clad in courtly silks erewhile,
Stoop when thy neighbour's wagon,
with its load
Of humble produce, on the rugged way
To Sarum fell, raise him, and from the
mire
Replace his burden with long toil, and
then,
Giving an alms and bidding him take
heed,
Even as he loved his soul, to spare his
beast,
Pace half-unconscious the astonished
street
Of the prim city, miry, unashamed.
But clearer yet I see thee, when the
strain
Of unheard rhythms filled thy happy
ears,
Wander from field to field ; and on the
road
To the great Minster, when thy soul
had need
Of new refreshment, ever on thy way,
Hoarding faint echoes of a voice Divine,
G'ow into fervent verse, and stone by
stone
Build up thy ' Temple ; ' and anon sit
rapt,

Leaving thy humbler liturgies awhile,
Within the heaven-kissed fane the
centuries

Mellow, and listen to the soaring chant
Sung daily still, the jubilant anthem's
voice

Of praise, the firstborn precious har-
monies

Of England's sacred song; the o'er-
mastering joy

Of the full organ-music glooming
deep

From aisle to aisle, or caught from
height to height,

Till lost at last as at Heaven's gate, and
thou

And thy rapt soul floated with it to joy.

Ah! blessed blameless years, to which
too soon

Stern Nature set her limit. Thy weak
frame

Three little years of too great happiness
Strained first, then wore out quite; thy
failing strength

First to the Minster might not bear thee
more

To foretaste Heaven. Then to thy
lowly church

No more thy footsteps fared. Thy
oratory

Thou still didst keep; and each suc-
ceeding day,

Matins and vespers, would thy feeble
voice

Give praise as thou wert wont, nor
would thy soul

Deny, while still thy body could, her
due

Of worship to the Lord who succoured
thee,

Lauding Him always. Last, when now
'twas grown

Too weak to serve, a faithful priest and
friend

Said the loved prayers, while thou with
thankful heart

Listenedst and wert content, and on thy
lips

Hovered a saintly smile!

Now when his life
Flowed nearer to its sea, there came a
priest,

Sent from his lifelong friend of youth
and age,

Nicholas Ferrar. 'Prithee,' cried the
saint,

'Take to my friend this message. God
is good,

And just in all His ways. Of His great
grace

I do rejoice in that which pleaseth
Him,

Ay, even to wane and die. Tell him
my heart

Is fixed on Him, and waits the ap-
pointed change

With hope and patience. Sir, I pray
you, give him

This little book, the portrait of long
strife

Betwixt my soul and Heaven, ere yet I
took

My Master's name, wherein I now go
free.

See, it is called "The Temple;" it
and I

Are less than His least mercies. Bid
him, sir,

Burn it, if judged unhelpful to weak
souls.

I prize it not. I look back from this
place

On my past life, the music that I loved,
The beauty I held dear, the pleasant
talk

Of books and men, and all are but a dream

And unreturning shadow, and I know
I go, as did my sires, to make my bed
In darkness; and I praise the Hand
which gives

Such patience to me now, and brings
me safe

Through Death's dark gate to Heaven.'
And he, when come

To his last earthly Sunday, suddenly
Rose in his bed, and, taking in his hand
His viol, once again with feeble voice
Sang his own hymn :

'The Sundays of Man's life,
Threaded together on Time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the Eternal Glorious King.
On Sunday Heaven's gate stands ope,
Blessings are plentiful and ripe,
More plentiful than hope !''

“More plentiful,”

I cried, “and poured from no unfruitful
horn.

Ay, but thy hope was great, pure saint,
who thus

From out thy dying chamber wentest
forth

Cheerful into the void, and didst defy
The Enemy, yielding thy grateful
soul

Into His hands who gave it. Shall thy
life

Fade from our thoughts, dear heart?
Nay, while thy clear

And yearning soul distils in verse that
breathes

Fresh odours of the Heaven it loved,
and decks

With quaint conceits thy Church, thy
Faith, thy Lord,

As erst the kneeling kings who honoured
Him

With frankincense and myrrh; nay,
while the spire

Thou lovedst, still points its finger to
the skies,

And this our England keeps her sober
faith—

Not of the zealot born, nor of the
priest—

And men still prize the gentle life and
path

Of contemplation, lit with flowers of
good,

And scented sweet with praise and
works of ruth

And charity. The fashion of our lives,
Our thoughts, our faiths, our Heaven
may suffer change,

But this one never.”

Next it was a man

With ruddy face and fair hair sprent
with gray,

And somewhat stern of aspect, till he
spoke—

A tall and vigorous form, a little bent
By too long prison years, in modest
garb

A Puritan; who next in time was born
To him whom last I saw; differing in
all,

In mien, in thought, in speech, yet
each inspired

And saintly. As I looked I seemed to
know

The wondrous peasant, who by dream-
ing thought,

Fine as the Bard's who sang of Heaven
and Hell,
Lightened his long duress, and for our
aid
Has left a record of the Pilgrim soul
Faring to Heaven by rough and perilous
ways,
Which myriads since have trod. And
thus my guide :

“ ‘ Poor and of meanest rank, and most
despised,’
At Elstow, in the dewy, daisied fields
Hard by the dreaming Ouse, was born
the saint
Thou seest, ere yet the clang of civil
strife
Frighted our land, and 'neath that
large bold will
Which swayed the Commonwealth, his
budding life
Ripened to manhood. In his father's
home,
A humble cottage, with the timbered
walls
Of older Eng'land, grew the stalwart
youth
Whom blameless strength and rude
untempered force
Urged sometimes headlong, prizing
overmuch
The sports his skill made dear ; the
flying ball
Winged by the tireless arm ; the joyous
toil
Of emulous comrades when the deafen-
ing peal
Swung from the reeling tower, and bell
with bell
Mingled reverberant chimes ; the village
green
When from the short sweet grass the
merry din

Of youthful voices rose, till the tired
sun
Lengthened the shadows, and the faint
young stars
Relit the fading skies. And oftentimes,
In hot impatient haste, his careless
tongue
Would break in reckless and un-
measured speech,
And oaths profane, till sober hearers
shunned
The rude wild youth. And yet his life
was pure
Of grosser sin ; the Fiends of Drink
and Lust
Allured him not ; only his headlong age
Possessed his life too much, and hurried
him
By earthly flower-set ways and far from
Heaven.

But not the less his self-accusing soul
Suffered for his offence. Visions by
night
Oppressed his boyish sleep. He saw
Heaven's dome
Aflame with fire, the boundless firma-
ment
Shivered by mighty thunders ; over all
The loud Archangel pealing, and a
throne
Set in the East, whereon sate One
whose face
Shone like the Morning Star. Anon
the earth,
Rent by a terrible earthquake, sank
with him
Into the nether hell, 'mid the dread
sights
And sounds of doom, when suddenly
there came
One who, on shining wings descending,
snatched

His fainting soul from that accursed
throng ;

And lo, it was a dream !

Soon, when the storm
Of warfare burst upon the Midland
fields,

A boy in years, against the faithless
king

He served a soldier, for the cause he
loved,

And saw h's comrade at his side fall
dead,

Shot through the brain. Yet when
that bitter strife

Was ended, to his old rude life he
turned,

As reckless as of old, until he found
A sweet girl-wife, devout, whose simple
faith

Loving the ancient worship drew his
feet

Sunday by Sunday to the gray old
church.

Matins and Vespers, and the tranquil
rite,

The surpliced priest, low prayer, and
soaring chant

Worked on him, and the cheerful
Sunday sports,

The dance, the race, the swift unerring
shaft,

When hymns and prayers were done ;
and so he lived

A blameless, unawakened life.

Till last,

One fateful Sabbath morning, as he
sate

Within the village church, the
preacher's voice,

Bidding them keep the holy day of
rest,

Seemed to the awakened conscience of
the youth

To probe his inner soul. The merry
throng

Crowded the green when the reproofing
voice

Was still, and with them he. But as
his arm

Was raised to strike the ball, again
the voice

Loud on his inner ear, and in the skies
A pitying Heavenly face, and all his

strength

Sank nerveless sudden as by that
strange chill

Which strikes the paralytic, and he
knew

Some vague awakened consciousness of
guilt

And terror ; but as yet no healing
power

Possessed his restless soul, only despair
And wretchlessness, and such un-

governed speech

That, hearing him, some hapless wanton
once

Reproved him for his fault.

Then with sad heart

He strove to mend. He set a ceaseless
watch

Upon his careless tongue, the sports he
loved

He shunned as sin, all innocent delights
He dared no more enjoy ; the game,

the dance,

Music at last, and song, with iron will

He put from him, and in the mellow
chimes

Of pealing bells and the tumultuous joy
Of mixed reverberant sound bore part

no more,

Standing without, beneath the reeling
tower,

An outcast in the darkness, grown at
last

Afraid lest haply the impending wails,
As in Siloam erst, avenged his sin.

Thus did he strive long time with his
own soul,

A doubter self-accused, till one fair day,
Working in summer, in the silent streets
Of Bedford, at his task, he chanced to
hear

Three humble women, sitting in the
sun,
Discourse of things Divine ; and all his
heart

Was kindled into faith in the New Birth
They spake of, and again and yet
again,

Day after day, he sought them ; for his
soul

Cared but for Heaven alone.

And then again,
Like his own Pilgrim, who had travelled
far

From the sad City on the road to
Heaven,

Yet passed to Doubting Castle, he would
make

A trial of his faith, still sore afraid
Lest he had none, bidding the little
pools

Of water dry because the Word had
said

That whoso should believe, even as
a grain

Of mustard - seed, might work all
miracles ;

And when he dared not put it to the
touch

Fresh doubts assailed his soul. Was
he elect

Among the saints of God? The day
of Grace,

Was it not past for him? Was there
yet room

For such as he? Ah, nay ; too late !
too late !

The ranks of the elect were full, the
tale

Accomplished, and for him the Pit of
Hell,

Naught else, for all his prayers. 'Go
sin ; thy fate

Is sealed, thou canst not change it,'
pealed the voice

Of Evil. But the undying voice within
Answered, 'I will not.' And amid the
gloom

Of utter hopelessness he kept his feet
From straying, though each trivial act
or word

He feared might turn to ill. Terror
of death

Pressed sore on him, lest he should die
in sin,

And yet he feared to live, lest haply
use

Might dull that healing pain. The
lowest brute,

Nay, the poor reptile on his path, he
deemed

Happier than he ; or if at times he
held

Some hope of Heaven, the Tempter
came and bade him,

In visions in the watches of the night,
Renounce the Hand which saved him.

'Sell him,' cried
The Tempter's voice within him, ruth-
lessly

Sounding through every trivial act and
thought,

Sleeping or waking ; till it came to
seem,

After long struggles and convulsive
throes,

As if at last his weary, o'erwrought
brain

Assented to the wrong. And straight
the day
Grew black as night, the very stones
cried out
Against his sin.

And then, oh joy! there came,
Even in the Valley of the Shadow of
Death,

To this poor pilgrim soul a heavenly
Light

And Voice of Comfort. All his former
sins

Of doubt or word or act, he knew
forgiven

Of a great Love and Grace; and
happiness

Unmixed with fear, and full assurance,
filled

That self-tormented soul. Rapt in
high joy,

When, like S. Francis 'midst his
feathered throng,

He paced the new-sown fallows whence
should spring

Life's seed, as for his soul, his jubilant
heart

Would almost to the cawing rooks
proclaim

His tale of Love Divine.

So that vexed soul
Found peace at last, and saw with
clearer sight

"The heights of Grace and Love and
Mercy." Soon

Within the lustral waters of the Ouse
His life was cleansed, and thenceforth
dedicate

To preach the Word he loved, his
eloquent speech,

Not tongue-tied by the learning of the
schools,

Speaking to sinners. As one from the
dead,

As one who bore a fire, oppressed by
guilt

And terror, came he, whom nor guilt
nor hell

Could silence, but 'neath humble roofs
and low,

On village greens, beneath the twilight
heavens,

Always he preached the Word. The
liturgies

Dear to the saintly Herbert drew him not,
For whom each prayer rose new-born
from the heart

To clothe itself in words, and so he
spake

With full assurance, soul to soul, and
led,

In part despite his creed, men's care-
less lives

To good and was content. Ay, though
the fire

Of fierce sectarian passion and loud
strifes

Swept the enfranchised land, and
slander's tooth

Assailed his peace, yet worked he for
his Lord

And was content.

But on those halcyon days
Broke the intolerant law. The warning
came

That he, on pain of weary prisoned
years,

And exile, and the bondsman's death
in life,

Should preach the Word no more. He
took no heed,

But when they closed his place of
praise and prayer,

In sheds or barns, or 'mid the shadowy
woods,

He spake to kindling souls. Last,
when the law

Forbade the freedom more, he scorned
to obey,
Since if it were a sin to meet, and draw
All men to follow Christ, then sin he
would.

Therefore to prison haled they him,
away
From his loved home. His dear and
ailing wife
He left; his helpless children four he
left;
And one, his little daughter blind from
birth,
Whom more than life he loved, to the
hard world
And penury and suffering years he left,
To do God's will; though all his
father's heart
Yearned to them, knowing all the
bitter pains,
Cold, hunger, nakedness, which should
await
The lives his' faith made orphan. Yet
his soul
Was steadfast. 'I must do His will,
I must,
And venture all for Him.'

And so his feet,
Pacing this weary wilderness, at length
Came on a certain place where was a
Den,
And there he laid him down for twelve
long years,
And dreamt his deathless dream.

Dear prison cell
Above all others blest! where self-
immured,
Because he might not purchase liberty
With silence from good words, that
suffering soul
Languished long years; no cloistered
convent pure

Bore rarer fruit than thine, nor hermitage
Beneath the desert stars. There lives
no race
Of Christian men but dreams thy
dream, nor creed
But holds it dear, because its clear voice
calls
Deep in the sacred silence of the soul!

For here it was that Christian rose and
fled

The City of Destruction, and alone
Toiled on the rugged, narrow way, to
where

The wicket gate was set, and a fair light
To guide to it. Here fell his feet awhile
Into the Slough of Despond. Here he
found

The House of the Interpreter, and
climbed

The Hill of Difficulty, and reposed
Within the Palace Beautiful, and slept
In Peace, and from the ramparts with
the dawn

Looked down upon Emmanuel's land,
a fair

And smiling country, rich with flowers
and fruits

And water-springs, and on the further
heaven

Flushed with, the rising Sun, the un-
trodden snows

Of the Delectable, Eternal Hills,
Hard by the City of God. And here
he took

His armour, and went fearless down to
fight

Apollyon, and prevailed, and saw
beneath,

Stretched in thick darkness, filled with
dreadful sounds,

The Valley of the Shadow of Death,
and dared

To thread the darkling pass, where
 piteous wails,
 And rising fiery smoke, and dead men's
 bones,
 And dreadfuller, the onward rushing
 flight
 Of Fiends unseen, the spectral shades
 of Doubt,
 Assailed his steadfast soul. And here
 he saw
 Vanity Fair, the sad world's counterfeit,
 Wherefrom the martyred Pilgrim passed
 to Heaven.
 And here the dungeon glooms of
 Doubting yawned,
 The stronghold of Despair, which held
 him fast
 Whose lips had tasted of the River of
 Life.
 Here smiled the plains of Beulah, and
 beyond
 Stole the dark deep which all mankind
 must cross,
 Sinner and saint ; and here the golden
 domes
 Of the Celestial City beamed on him
 Who after Life's sad pilgrimage was
 blest !

But when to his dear home he came
 again,
 After twelve years of prison, free to
 preach
 His message as he would, he knew
 what change
 Time brings to all ; dead was his sight-
 less girl,
 And bare his humble home. So with
 brave heart
 He set himself to work, but chiefly
 vowed
 His toil to Heaven. To labour for his
 Church

Was all his joy, and yet his worldly store
 Increased, and he in great respect of
 men,
 With his good wife, among his stalwart
 boys,
 Flourished long busy years ; and all the
 doubt
 And misery of old were gone, and clear
 The sunset of the evening of his days
 Shone on him, tranquil gold. Through
 all the strife
 Of those dark troubled times, he lived
 unmoved
 A peaceful life, scorning the narrow
 bonds
 Dear to the zealot, broad in tolerance
 For every Christian creed or rite or
 name
 Which loved the Spirit of God ; and
 toiled for souls
 In his dear native town, and was content.

Then while as yet his green, unbroken
 age
 Was vigorous, came the end which
 comes at last
 To all things living. One there was
 whose wrath
 Burned fierce against his son, and he
 who knew
 The blessing of the Peacemakers was
 fain
 To reconcile the pair. And as he rode
 Loving his task, upon the wintry way
 A sudden rain-storm chilled his weary
 frame,
 And fever racked his limbs. Ten
 suffering days
 He lingered far from home, and with
 the cry,
 'Take me—to Thee I come,' breathed
 out his life."

Which things when I had heard, my
 kindling soul
 Burst into words: "Oh, precious gift
 and rare
 Of Heaven, which from the slough of
 common life,
 And stony wastes of penury, despite,
 Oppression, want, despondency, canst
 raise
 The perfumed rose of Fancy, and the
 pure
 White lily of the Saint! Ah, not alone
 In cloistered convents cold, or storied
 shrines,
 Springs up the saintly life, nor in the
 Halls
 Of Learning blooms the perfect flower
 of thought!
 Myriads of faltering feet have trod the
 road
 Thou trodest once, and fought and
 fallen, or come
 Through thee to victory, and as they
 pass,
 Fired with a broader faith and wider
 hope
 Than that thou knewest; on their pain-
 ful way,
 Not wholly thine, but to the self-same
 goal,
 Still solaced by thy precious allegory,
 Take thee and thy quaint Dream for
 staff and guide,
 Throughout the perilous pilgrimage to
 Heaven."

Then came another, of priestly garb
 and mien,
 A young man still, wanting the years
 of Christ,

But long since with the saints. Not
 as the priest
 Of Sarum, or that peasant pilgrim, he.
 A poet with the contemplative gaze
 And listening ear, but quick of force
 and eye,
 Who fought the wrong without, the
 wrong within,
 And, being a pure saint, like those of
 old,
 Abased himself and all the precious
 gifts
 God gave him, flinging all before the
 feet
 Of Him whose name he bore—a fragile
 form
 Upon whose hectic cheek there burned
 a flush
 That was not health; who lived as
 Xavier lived,
 And died like him upon the burning
 sands,
 Untended, yet whose creed was far
 from his
 As pole from pole; whom grateful
 England still
 Loves, though his face I knew not.
 And my guide,
 Breathing his name, spake thus:

"In Truro town,
 Hard by the wave-worn headlands of
 the West,
 When now the eighteenth century of
 the Faith
 Drew near its end, its martyr that
 should be
 Was Henry Martyn born. His father's
 arm
 Long in the dark abysses of the mine
 Slaved for his children's bread. The
 little son,
 A weakly boy and studious, sate apart,

Shunning the school's rude games, too
 oft the sport
 Of coarser wills and stronger, till he
 found
 A stout young arm, upon whose ready
 aid
 He rested and was happy; and his
 keen
 And vivid brain grew stronger, and his
 thirst
 For knowledge, till at length, a boy in
 age,
 To Granta's venerable halls he went,
 A student not obscure, and with hard
 toil
 Laboured four happy years of blame-
 less youth,
 And took at last the foremost place,
 and rose
 To fame and honour of men, and
 reaped the high
 Reward of studious hours, the un-
 troubled life
 Spent in the contemplative courts where
 comes
 No murmur of the world, but only
 thought
 And knowledge draw the thinker, till
 sometimes
 The careless soul, missing the whole-
 some stir
 Of daily care, grows slothful, the quick
 brain
 Sinks low in indolent ease and base
 content,
 And bears no worthy fruit.

But not for him
 These perils were, because a higher
 thirst—
 Higher than wealth, or ease, or honour
 of men,
 Or learning's self—possessed his yearn-
 ing soul;

When the same friend who helped his
 friendless youth,
 Now to a full and finer manhood
 grown,
 Bade him do all things not for fame of
 men,
 But for God's glory. And his sister's
 voice
 Thrilled through him with the pure
 ascetic glow
 Of simple fervour. Not at first his soul
 Gave heed, impatient with those warn-
 ing words,
 And fired with youthful pride and hot
 pursuit
 Of flying knowledge; but at length the
 spark
 Kindled within him, and the sudden
 loss
 Of the dear father of his love laid bare
 The chambers of his soul, and filled his
 heart
 With other thoughts than earth's, till,
 when he gained
 The meed of all his hopes, which
 opened to him
 The path of earthly honour, the youth's
 soul
 Knew, with a sick surprise, his empty
 hand
 Grasped but a shadow.

Then the awakened gaze,
 Turned wholly from the earth; on
 things of Heaven
 He dwelt both day and night. The
 thought of God
 Filled him with infinite joy; his crav-
 ing soul
 Dwelt on Him as a feast, as did the
 soul
 Of rapt Francesco in his holy cell
 In blest Assisi; and he knew the
 pain,

The deep despondence of the saint, the
doubt,
The consciousness of dark offence, the
joy
Of full assurance last, when Heaven
itself
Stands open to the ecstasy of faith.

Therefore, though all men smiled on
him, though smooth
Life's path lay stretched before him—
wealth and fame,
The dignity of learning, the high meed
Which crowns the pleader's skill, the
Senate itself,
Waiting his keen young brain—he
turned from all
To that untried, laborious way which
lay
Across wide seas, to spend a lonely life
Spreading the light he loved, beneath
the glare
Of tropic skies, by desert sands and
wilds
Far from all Christian converse, and
the gain
Of our long eighteen centuries, and
pine
Alone 'mid millions, knowing not his
Lord ;
The Brahmins' fables, the relentless lie
Of Islam—these he chose to bear, who
knew
How swift the night should fall on him,
and burned
To save one soul alive while yet 'twas
day.
This filled his thoughts, this only, and
for this
On the pure altar of his soul he heaped
A costlier sacrifice, this youth in years,
For whom Love called, and loving
hands, and hope

Of childish lives around him, offering
these,
Like all the rest, to God.

Yet when his hour
Was come to leave his England, was it
strange
His weakling life pined for the parting
kiss
Of love and kindred, whom his pre-
scent soul
Knew he should see no more, and,
week by week
Tossed on the wandering wave, driven
back once more
By battling winds, looked with deep
longing eyes
On the dear shore? Yet never did he
pray
The cup might pass from him, not
when the curse
Of war assailed his gentle eyes and
wrung
His soul with agony. A priest, he
filled
All priestly duty, though his shudder-
ing soul
Shrank from the sight of blood.
Through storm and stress
And perils of the sea, through all
despite
Of scoffing men, who lent no willing
ear
To his high message, still the humble
saint
Was instant in his work, and bore the
jeers
And unbelief around him, he who left
His place of honour for the Faith, and
did
His uncomplaining service. Thus at
last
He reached the Indian shore, where he
would spend

His life in saintly labours till the end.

There ten long years he toiled on, day
by day,

Writing his patient record of a soul
Which struggles for the Right. The
home of friends

Who cared for him and Heaven, and
would have kept him,

Impatient for his work, he left be-
hind,

And straight, across the burning plains,
alone,

Sped, cheerful, where no ray of Christ
had risen

To break the age-long gloom ; there,
solitary,

Unfriended, solaced by no answering
soul,

With little blessing on his work, or
fruit

Of his great toil, reproaching every
hour

He lost for God, knowing how short
his span,

And how immense his task, now
preaching oft

To careless ears, now spending his
keen brain

As when he wrought for fame and
honour of men,

With Munshi and with Pundit, if his
skill

Might give to each, in his own tongue,
the Word,

He spent his youth. Last, when his
task of love

Was done, and seven long years of
ceaseless toil

Had worked their will on him, there
came fresh griefs

To try his faith. The woman of his
love

Feared to leave all and give her life to
his,

And both to God ; his sisters passed
away

To Heaven, nor saw him more. There
seemed on earth

Nothing for which to live, except the
Faith ;

The last of all his race, unloved,
alone—

Only the Faith, the Faith ! until his
soul

Wore thin her prison bars, and he was
fain

To rest awhile, or work no more the
work

For which alone he lived.

Then over seas

Once more he took his way, leaving
the land

Where he had hoped to die, along the
roll

Of the warm tropic wave. Once more
he saw

Ceylon's green palm-fringed shore, the
sumptuous tomb

Of him, his brother of old, who strove
like him

To spread the Faith, and, like him,
died for it,

S. Francis Xavier, and among the
caves

Of storied Elephanta stayed ; but soon,
His great zeal firing him, took ship

again,

And, after weary wanderings, gained
at last

The Persian wastes, and dared the
difficult track

To Shiraz through the desert. Day by
day

The fierce sun blazed upon the sands ;
by night

The dead air, like a furnace blast,
 assailed
 His fevered frame, and parched him
 and consumed him
 With horrible thirst, and robbed his
 eyes of sleep
 Till life was well-nigh spent. And
 then the hand
 Which seemed to guide him always led
 his feet
 To a sweet vale, England in sight and
 sound,
 Hidden in the dreadful waste, where
 cool airs blew,
 Streams ran, and birds sang clear, and
 wheat was gold.
 Then all his faithful heart burst forth in
 praise,
 As did the Kingly Bard's: 'He maketh
 us
 To lie down in green pastures, and
 beside
 The clear cool waters leadeth.' Thus
 his soul
 Made laud, and was content, praising
 the Lord,
 In Shiraz.

There one happy toilsome year
 He sojourned. Day by day the sages
 came
 Who held the faith of Islam, and would
 hear
 Of Him whose Name he taught.
 Through the long days
 He laboured at his work, spending the
 gifts
 God lent him, for the Faith. Last,
 when at length
 The Gospel spake to Persian ears, he
 bore
 His work to Tabriz, where he sought
 the King,
 Faring by night along the moonlit vales,

Through bowery lanes, where the loud
 nightingales
 Thrilled the white fields with song.
 Then feverish heats
 Burned him upon his way, and sapped
 his strength;
 And when, weak unto death, he reached
 the place
 Where the King sojourned late, he
 found him not,
 Only his courtiers' scorn. Then his
 great heart
 Broke in impatient words. 'My God,'
 he cried,
 'What fault is mine that men should
 mock me thus,
 Save only love for Thee?' And when
 he turned
 Despairing homeward, soon again he
 pined
 Prostrate in pain, the fever seizing him
 Two weary months, and his brain
 burned like fire,
 A present death in life. Yet not the
 less
 His faithful soul bare witness to the
 Faith.
 Rejection, sickness, torment—what are
 these
 To the believer's thought! And when
 he rose,
 Musing upon the enormous waste which
 lay
 'Twixt him and home, whither, his
 brave work done,
 His longing eyes were turned, his
 weary heart
 Fainted within him, and he looked no
 more
 To press the hands he loved. Hopeless
 he fared
 On his last journey. 'Neath the fabled
 peak

Of Ararat he stayed awhile, to rest
 In the hushed convent with the
 Armenian monks,
 A cheerful guest. And then again the
 grip
 Of fever clutched him, and depressed
 his soul
 With sad forebodings. Yet he struggled
 still
 Towards Stamboul, though the plague
 slew day by day
 Its thousands, and the affrighted tribes
 around
 Fled the advancing Death. 'Thy will
 be done ;
 Living or dying, oh, remember me !'
 Thus writes the dying saint. And then
 long days
 Of misery, which his languid hand
 records,
 When now a fire consumed him, now
 the cold
 Of palsy left him ice. Laid on the
 ground,
 His soul was filled with God, his
 Company,
 His Friend, his Comforter. 'Oh, when
 shall Time
 Be done, and that new Heaven and
 Earth appear
 Where dwelleth Righteousness?' Thus
 his hand traced
 Its last pure words. Then but a few
 brief hours,
 And he unfriended, far from help and
 home,
 Alone, but having Christ, with no kind
 hand
 To close the eyes which saw the joys
 unseen
 And vision of the blest ; worn out, in
 pain—
 Whether of fever or the deadly force

Of pestilence, none knoweth—breathed
 his last,
 And bore the martyr's palm."

And then once more
 I seemed to hear a voice,—was it my
 guide,
 Or my own soul?—discourse :
 " Shall any ask,
 Was all thy suffering naught, because
 the strength
 Of Error still bears sway? Ah ! too
 brief life,
 So jealous of each hour, and counting
 lost
 Each day not vowed to Heaven. What,
 hadst thou known
 Thy labour thus in vain? Fourscore
 long years
 Have passed since thou, like kindred
 souls to-day,
 Diedst for the Truth ; the long, slow,
 barren years
 Mock us and all our toil. Hadst thou
 done well
 To reap a little while thy well-earned
 meed
 Of Thought in lettered ease? Hadst
 thou done well
 To give thee to the pleader's art, and
 strive
 To make the Wrong seem Right, and
 sink at last
 To wealth and praise of men, seeking,
 a judge
 Scorning the graceless sophistries of
 old,
 To cure thy former ill—thou whose
 keen brain
 Had doubtless borne thee far? Hadst
 thou done well

To doze slow hours, sunk deep in
 mitred ease,
 Soothed by sweet chants, lost in the
 vaporous grey;
 Or, a great preacher, mark the moist-
 ened eyes,
 Flushed cheeks, and quick-drawn
 breaths thy facile tongue
 Had stirred, thyself unmoved ; or shine
 a light
 Of the Senate, till thy peers in high
 debate
 Bowed to thy eloquent speech, and
 thou shouldst guide
 The helm of our great England? Was
 it well
 To hold this strange Twin-Nature of
 our Race,
 Which soars so high and sinks so low,
 as thou,
 Unutterably vile in thought, in will,
 In every action vile, trampling thy
 soul
 In dust before thy God, who made thee
 too,
 And all things, and has left us free to
 take
 The path we would, to Heaven or hell,
 and knows
 His work not wholly base, nor framed
 too fine
 For this our place of trial? Nay, I
 know
 How many ways of safety He displays
 To the awakened soul the way thou
 trodd'st,
 The way of San Francesco's blessed
 cell,
 The honourable trivial road which leads
 By silent saintly liturgies of home
 Up to the selfsame Heaven. But this
 I know
 Is certain, that thy lifelong sacrifice

Was best for thee, and best the voice
 which called
 From love and friendship, ay, from all
 good things
 Which make life happy, to the burning
 plains
 Where thou shouldst spend thy few and
 evil days
 Of toil and suffering, pouring forth thy
 life
 Like water for the Faith, shedding thy
 blood
 As did of old the Martyrs, drop by drop,
 Upon the ungrateful sand of heathen
 hearts."

And then I saw a stately figure come,
 Which seemed to wear the quaint and
 dovelike robe
 Of silver-grey, the lawn that hid the
 hair,
 The modest decent garb they love who
 vow
 Their lives to Heaven, and though no
 convent bars
 Withdraw them from the world, around
 them build
 A nunnery, and, 'mid the noise and din
 Of all the sensual and wrongful world,
 An oratory where the Spirit may dwell
 And, long-awaited, claim its own ; the
 band
 Who struck the fetters from the slave,
 who tend
 The halt and sick, and spend themselves
 in works
 Of mercy for the prisoners who lie
 bound
 In chains their sins have forged ; and
 straight my eyes

Knew whom it was they saw, before
 my guide,
 With grave voice softening as it went,
 replied
 To my unspoken thought.

“A hundred years
 Have passed since she thou seest, on
 the earth
 Came first, of gentle birth and wealth
 and ease,
 Where the grey Anglian city in the east
 Broods round its central spire. A
 blooming girl,
 In her first youth she trod with eager
 feet
 The path of innocent pleasure; none
 more gay
 At chase or festal than the lithe young
 form
 Who in her scarlet habit loved to fly
 Across the rushing fields, or listen rapt
 To stirring martial melodies, or tread
 The giddy measures of the dance, and
 take,
 With her young motherless sisters, what
 delight
 Beseemed their youth. Then, in her
 budding age,
 When only seventeen summers smiled
 on her,
 The joys she scarce had known began
 to pall,
 And she reproached herself with every
 thought
 Which stole her hours from Heaven.
 Blind dreams of good,
 Yearnings for something higher than
 she knew,
 Took her, and, knowing this perplexed
 world
 Moves towards the best, she felt her
 drifting life

A hapless bark which fronts the gather-
 ing storm
 Without a pilot's skill. But the great
 Hand
 Was with her not the less, though yet
 unseen,
 And soon the pleading of a kindred
 soul
 Sent over seas, woke in her inmost
 depths
 Assurance mixt with tears, and presently
 The dull world faded from her, and
 she gave
 Her all to Heaven. Then all her costly
 robes
 She left, and took the habit of a Friend
 And their plain speech—slowly, and
 half ashamed,
 Lest those who knew her scoffed; but
 not the less
 She was convinced, and held the Faith
 to the end.

Thence through her long sweet life, her
 own hand writes
 Her daily story. Through what deeps
 of doubt
 And self-distrust, high yearnings, often
 dashed
 By that o'erwhelming sense of grave
 offence
 Which takes the saints alone, and often-
 times
 What high and glorious certitudes of
 faith,
 The heavens standing open, and the
 Lord
 Beckoning with gracious hand, they
 know who read
 The story of her days. Love came to
 her,
 And happy wedlock, and unclouded
 years,

And fair-grown offspring. All good
 gifts of earth,
 'As honour, love, obedience, troops of
 friends,'
 A heart which turned to Heaven and
 dwelt with God—
 All these were hers. Ofttimes she
 spake the Word,
 Spurning the conscious weakness of her
 sex
 And her own shrinking modesty ; oft-
 times
 She nursed the sick, and did relieve
 with alms
 The needy, works of mercy and of faith
 Filling her life. And yet, not all-
 content
 With such high duty, still her yearning
 soul,
 Which not the weight of daily house-
 hold care,
 Nor love of spouse or children, satisfied,
 Panted for more, and hastened to the
 work
 Which keeps her memory green, and
 crowns her Saint,
 And raised her to the skies.
 'Twas in the foul
 And crowded prison wards her pitying
 heart
 Found its fit task. Three hundred
 hapless souls
 Huddled together, starving, naked,
 vile—
 The innocent and guilty, the poor wretch
 Who stepped a foot-pace from the path
 of good,
 Mewed side by side within that narrow
 jail
 With those who had put off, for
 desperate years,
 The last thin rags of shame ; a dreadful
 band,

Brutal, unclean, without a bed to rest
 Their miserable limbs, save the damp
 floor
 Of the foul, reeking dungeon. Frenzied
 cries
 Of rank offence, blaspheming God and
 man,
 Worse than of madness, smote the
 shrinking ear ;
 And 'mid the hideous throng, more
 piteous still,
 The teeming ranks of children, the
 shrill note
 Of childish voices trained in all the lore
 Of wickedness, to beg, to sot, to
 steal,
 To curse. Each sight and sound that
 had made Hell
 More dreadful than before, the sight of
 lives
 Which had been innocent once, now
 doomed and damned,
 Forlorn of men, and quite forgot by
 God !
 Nay, not forgotten ! Since one human
 heart
 Felt pity for them still. The faithful
 soul
 Of that good nursing-mother blazed
 afire,
 Hearing and seeing, and her inmost
 depths
 Were kindled into flame. But not at
 once
 Might she begin her life-work. Birth
 and Death,
 Young lives that came and went, the
 loss of friends
 And brethren, that strange hush and
 chill which comes
 To every home when first the young
 flock dares

To spread weak wings and tempt the
 perilous air
 Beyond the nest—these held her three
 long years
 Far from the work she loved.

And then at last
 She found her footsteps free, and took
 her way
 To the grim prison where that hapless
 crowd
 Rotted in sin. Alone, with none to
 aid,

Like the old seer among the ravening
 jaws,
 Or that diviner Figure which beamed
 hope

To the poor prisoned spirits waiting
 long,

The Beatific End, she passed and
 brought

The light of fuller Day, with mild eyes
 filled

With gentle pity for their sin, with
 voice

So clear, so soft, so musical, the tongue
 As of an angel. 'Mid the noise, the
 din

Of blasphemy, and rank offence, she
 spake

And hushed all other sound, except the
 noise

Of weeping from repentant hearts, and
 told

How, even at the eleventh hour, the
 Lord

Was strong to save, telling of Him she
 served,

Whose name they knew not yet; and
 on the depths

Of those poor rayless souls, sunk deep
 in ill,

Shone with some pure reflected light of
 Heaven,

And touched—a mother herself—the
 mothers' hearts

With pity for the children who should
 come

Like them to ruin, till the spark Divine,
 Which never dies out quite, shone out
 once more,

And once again, from out the sloughs
 of sin,

Uprose toward Heaven some faint fair
 flower of good.

Thus she, and with her a devoted band
 Of women, strove for God. With
 instant prayer

She pleaded with them; clothing,
 shelter, food

She gained for them, and tidings of the
 Word.

And for those hapless childish lives she
 found

Fit teaching; those poor souls the
 pitiless law

Doomed to the felon's end, she fortified,
 As did of old S. Catharine, with her
 prayers

Even at the gate of Death.

Nor could her pity
 Stay here, nor bear the intolerable
 load

Of the uncaring law which played with
 life

As might a tiger, stern, exacting blood
 For every trivial ill. With those vile
 powers

Unfaith and selfishness, which ruled the
 world

And mar it yet and will, she strove with
 might,

And did at last prevail; and ere she
 died,

No more the shameless wickedness was
 done

Which from all time had shed the
 innocent blood
 In the pure name of Law, staking a life
 Against each venial wrong. Oh, clear-
 eyed soul,
 That saw the Right undimmed, above
 the mists
 That blinded worldly eyes, because it
 knew
 The rule of Right, one with the Law
 of God !

But not alone her works of mercy
 touched
 The prisoner in his cell. When to their
 doom
 Of slavery, worse than death, the sense-
 less law
 Had sent those hapless souls, over wide
 seas,
 To the far underworld, it prisoned
 them
 Mixed as of yore, the felon old in sin,
 The almost innocent, and the young
 lives
 Of children thrust together, month on
 month
 Festering between the crowded decks,
 till came
 The day when they were flung upon
 the shore
 Of a new land, helpless, unclothed,
 unfed,
 Tainted by forced companionship with
 ill,
 To die of want or only live by sin.
 These wrongs her prescient eye fore-
 saw and gave
 Her thought to mend. Young sinners
 new to wrong
 She from the guiltier set apart, and all,
 When the new world loomed on their
 wondering gaze,

Found hands of welcome. Oft, in some
 frail skiff
 Daring the wintry Thames, ere the sad
 ship
 Sailed with its load, her soft imploring
 voice
 Rose high for all, commending them to
 Heaven,
 And pleading with such gentle words
 and pure,
 Their hard hearts melted, and the flow-
 ing tears
 Relieved their pain ; and on the deck
 around
 The rude rough seamen heard, without
 a word,
 The saint's high message and the sweet
 clear tones,
 And grew ashamed to scoff ; while as
 she knelt
 The helpless women checked their
 gathering grief,
 In silence till the dark boat on the
 stream
 Was lost in night, and took their only
 friend.

Thus throughout all the land, year after
 year,
 She cleansed each teeming prison. The
 chill North
 She traversed, and the melancholy
 West,
 And by the perilous seas which welter
 round
 The still-vexed Channel Isles, thence
 to fair France,
 Still seeking what of help she could for
 those
 Whom their sin prisoned fast, and the
 low plains
 Of deep-sunk Holland. Where her
 footsteps turned

She left a blessing. From the Russian
snows

Came news of those her high example
drew

To kindred deeds of mercy. Courts
and Thrones

Paid fitting honour to her work, and
she,

Amid the felons now, now set on high
With Queens to do her honour, kept
unchanged

Her humble heart, breathing the self-
same prayer :

‘ By any ways, by any paths Thou wilt,
So men may come to knowledge of Thy
Truth.’

But not the less the changing, chance-
ful world

Pressed on her, than on those blest
souls of old.

The wealth she only prized because it
gave

Power to do good ; which gathers day
by day

To crush the miser with its load, from
her

Was taken for no fault ; her stately
home

She left a blameless exile. Time and
Death

Knocked loudly at her doors. The
saintly band,

Brothers and sisters, thinned ; the lov-
ing eyes

Of children closed untimely ; the young
lives

Of children’s children went, leaving
her age

To mourn them. Fever coming swept
the home

Of her dear son, and took him, the
strong stay

Of his young flock. Who reads her
story knows

A gathering tale of loss, to which each
year

Brought its own added sum. Her
natural force,

Before the allotted span, grew faint
and wan,

And, spent with pain, month after
month she lay

In suffering, till she prayed, if ’twere
God’s will,

That she might be at rest ; and some-
times, weak

And sore beset, her saintly humble-
ness

Was dashed with self-distrust, and she
who felt

The Everlasting Arms beneath her, knew
The natural fear which oftentimes vexes

less

The sinner than the saint.

So when her hour
Was come, her children round her, she
prepared

To meet the Lord she loved. She
whose long life

Was lived for Him ; whose earliest
waking thought

Was every morn for Him ; whose
gathering years

Were crowned with deeds of mercy ;
whose dear name,

In every clime, thousands of rescued
souls

Uttered with tremulous lips and full of
praise ;

Whose thought was always how to raise
to hope

The poor, the sick, the fallen ; how to
strike

The fetters from the prisoner and the
slave ;

And save the piteous childish lives the
State
Had left to certain ruin—she no less
Knew the Divine despondency which
marks
The saintly soul. ‘Pray for me,’ said
her voice ;
‘It is a strife, but I am safe.’ ”

“Dear saint,
Ay, thou wert safe,” I cried, “because
thy heart
Was humble ! To what heights of
purity,
What inaccessible awful precipices
Of duty, didst thou turn thy gaze whose
soul
Knew this diviner failure ? To what
depths
Of inner heaven, to what perfectness
Of Him thy Great Exemplar, didst thou
strain ?
Not only in the cloister the rapt soul
Dwells with Him, or beneath the mid-
night stars
Mingles with Him and bears the sacred
wounds
Of the Passion, but along the well-trod
road
Of daily trivial life the race is run
To where the crown awaits them, and
the palm.
Who loves the Right, loves Him who
taught it too ;
And whoso loves his brother, loves his
Lord.”

And then there came, last risen to the
skies,
The newest of the saints I marked, who
went
Only one brief year since, to bear the
palm
And wear the crown, a priest whose
comely youth,
Dark kindly eyes, and broad and
thoughtful brow
Showed still to haunting fancy marks of
care,
Sobering its new-found joy. The gentle
gaze
Lighted the gracious face, no longer
scarred
By fell disease, that was his cross, his
crown ;
And with a double tenderness my guide
Made answer softly to my silent quest.

“From the long wave of the Pacific
Sea
Rise the enchanted islands of the West.
There the green surge, translucent,
flowered with foam,
Flings its warm snows to kiss the stoop-
ing palm ;
But from the deep’s soft bosom rose no
sound
Of rippling mirth, nor more the fair
brown forms,
Half heathen, naked, joyous, crowned
with flowers,
Rode high as erst on the caressing wave,
Because some strange immedicable hurt
Consumed them, and they pined in
hopeless pain,
Despairing, till a servant of the Lord
Was sent to them with succour for their
need,
And cleansed the desperate souls, which,
struck by doom,

Cursing their fate, turned them to reckless ill ;

And gave his life to serve them, till he died,

A leper in their midst.

At Tremeloo,

Upon the far-off Belgian plain, was born
He whom the admiring tongues of half
the world

Call Damien. All the story of his days
Is full of pureness. A strange child,
engrossed

In musing thought, he with the shepherd
herds loved

To drive afield ere yet the opening morn,
Loosed from its flood-gates in the
illuminated east,

O'erflowed the slumbering plains.
There all day long,

A lamb amid the innocent lambs, in
play

He whiled away the hours, till all his kin
And kindly neighbours knew his childish
name,

'The Little Shepherd ;' and the lessons
learnt

From solitary musings, with the broad
Still plain around, and the unbounded
vault

Of Heaven above him, and no sound
of life

Save bleating flocks and humming bees
and songs

Of mounting larks, inspired his brooding
thought

With visions not of earth, and framed
his lips

To an unspoken praise ; and when he
heard

The 'Angelus' thrill o'er the twilight
fields,

His childish soul rejoiced, and his
young knees

Were bent in prayer, till all the country
side

Cherished the strange grave child.

And once, men tell,
At Whitsuntide, the holy feast, there
was

A neighbouring fair of simple revelry,
And since the dawn none saw him.

When they searched
The crowded village streets, they found
no trace

Of the young truant ; but his grandsire
went,

Knowing his faith, to seek him, and,
indeed,

He was not 'mid the careless peasant
throng,

Nor jovial haunts of rustic merriment,
But in the church ; for in the darkling
aisles

They found the young child kneeling,
rapt, alone,

Breathing some simple prayer. For all
his soul

Was full of the Unseen, and all his
heart

Turned heavenward as the sunflower to
the sun.

But when his childish days were past,
and now

Youth blossomed in him, youth with
dim grave thoughts

And scarce confessed designs, he would
not take

Thought of the priestly office yet, but
spent

His throbbing, eager life in wholesome
cares

Fit for his budding age. Yet was his
soul

Maiden and pure, and all who knew
the boy

Praised his white life. Till one day,
 when his years
 Touched close on manhood, in a church
 he knelt,
 Where some strong Preacher, fired
 with faith in good,
 Spake burning words ; and straight his
 ardent heart
 Kindled, and all night long he knelt
 and prayed
 For guidance, and Heaven came to him
 and rapt
 That yearning soul, so that he would
 no more
 Do his own work, but God's.

And so he took
 The priestly office, and there came
 command—
 The priest, his brother, lying like to
 die—
 He in his stead should bear the lamp
 of Faith
 To the far isles of the Pacific Sea,
 Across the world, alone. And when
 he heard,
 His glad heart leapt within him, for he
 knew
 That thus he best should do God's
 will and work
 His work upon the earth.

After long months
 Of storm-tost days and perilous, with
 the spring,
 Upon the day of his good patron
 saint,
 S. Joseph, to his fated shore he came,
 Hawaii, where he laboured year by
 year
 In happiness, doing his Master's work
 With ceaseless toil. Once on a moun-
 tain side
 He paused, knowing that somewhere
 nigh lay hid

A Christian village, where the hungry
 souls
 Waited their coming priest. When,
 with great stress
 Of hand and foot, on the precipitous
 steep
 Climbing, he gained the summit, lo !
 beneath
 A cavernous chasm yawned ; but no-
 where saw he
 Traces of men. Yet, without thought
 of doubt,
 He, by new difficult crags ascending,
 spied
 Another loftier hill, and climbed again
 And reached the summit ; but again
 no trace
 Of men or dwellings, but a lonely
 plain,
 And then again a hill ; and so at last,
 After long toil, spent, bleeding hand and
 foot,
 Calling to mind the sufferings on the
 Tree,
 And that for those poor souls his
 Master died,
 Tottering he found his people, and
 confirmed
 Their faith, and was rewarded for his
 pain.

But while his long laborious days he
 spent
 In service of his Lord, his pitying eyes
 Took many a sight of grievous misery
 Which naught might heal. For on
 those happy isles,
 Where sea and sky wear a perpetual
 smile,
 And all the lavish earth with flower
 and fruit
 Laughs always, and from out the
 odorous gloom

Of blossomed trees a myriad creepers hang Laden with perfume, and the feathery fronds Of giant ferns spring upward twice the height Of a man's stature, and bright birds flash by On jewelled wings, a thousand brilliant hues, Flower-like, among the flowers, and the clear sea Holds in its azure deeps a thousand lights Of sapphire scales, or gold, or glowing red, Or tints which match the rainbow's all in one, Brighter than any which the cunning skill Of painter limns ; and, 'midst the tropic wealth Of lustrous blossoms strange to Northern eyes, Sweet roses blush, and lilies sprent with gold Droop their fair heads, and starry myrtles wake Memories of classic grace ;—amidst all these And the poor joyous lives which, crowned with flowers, Like the old careless gods of Pagan eld, Let the hours pass, and were content, nor knew Our Northern cares, nor thought of Hell or Heaven, Naught but delight ; there came long years ago, Brought from the teeming East, a dreadful ill, Which naught might cure, and seized those hapless limbs,	And rotted them away, mere death in life, Maimed horribly, and losing human form And semblance, till at last the wretched spirit Released itself and fled. And since the touch Of hand or robe was thought to take with it The dread contagion, from the land they chased Those hopeless sufferers, to where there rose Sheer from the Southern Sea the frown- ing cliffs Of Molokai. On its northern edge The island blossoms into purple peaks, With soaring heads veiled in a fleece of white. There down each steep precipitous gorge the gleam Of leaping waters issuing from the clouds Lights the dark cliffs, and, where a sunbeam strikes, Sparkles in rainbow mists ; while at the foot Of those great walls, just raised above the surge, Stretches an emerald plain, white with the homes Of lepers, none beside. Thither, when now The unerring symptoms of that dread- ful ill Had shown in them, the lifelong exiles sailed, Bidding a last farewell to home and kin, And love and life, till the slow-working plague Consumed their limbs away. No hope was theirs,
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Nor fear of God or man ; only their
 doom,
 Fixed on them undeserving, filled their
 souls
 With horror and despair, and careless
 hate
 Of Heaven, and utter recklessness of
 ill,
 Since doomed they were, and an un-
 checked desire
 To enjoy, since die they must. And
 so it came
 That those poor lives, pining in misery,
 Blasphemed their fate and lived in pre-
 sent hell.
 Yet, since no more they might return,
 nor those
 Who tended them, long time they pined
 with none
 To care for them, till one day, when the
 ship
 Sailed with its fatal load, and the saint
 took
 His last farewells with tears, the fire of
 Faith
 Flamed up within his heart. Without
 a word
 To friends, or care for clothing or for
 food,
 Of a sudden Damien leapt on board,
 and went
 Joyful to meet his doom of pain and
 death,
 Like the brave saints of old ; and for
 our age,
 Our weakling age, sick of a deadly
 doubt,
 Renewed the primal ecstasy of Faith !

 There, sixteen years 'mid those forsaken
 folk,
 He laboured. Long, beneath no shel-
 tering roof

But open to the winds and rains of
 heaven
 He slept, when sleep he might ; for all
 his hours
 Were spent to bring to God the perish-
 ing souls
 Their great despair corrupted. Every-
 where
 His cheerful smile and faithful words
 allured
 The lives his hands relieved, and every-
 where
 The people, struggling back to love
 and right,
 Left the old vices of despair, the drink
 That brought oblivion, and the sensual
 depths
 Wherein they wallowed late, devoid of
 hope,
 Forlorn of God ; and day by day the
 sound
 Of prayer and praise arose where
 blasphemies
 Had rent the shuddering air. And
 since the power
 Of lustral waters oftentimes works out
 A miracle upon the tainted soul
 As on the body, and what cleanses this
 Makes pure the other ; from a clear
 cold pool
 High on the mountain, fed by rain and
 cloud,
 He led the full stream's salutary flow
 To every hut where desperate suffering
 pined ;
 And straight those wretched lairs grew
 clean, the plague
 Lightened, and with it pain, and their
 lips blessed
 The saint who succoured them, and,
 through him, God,
 And sinned no more, and hope reviving
 wrought

Its precious spell, and happy flower-set
homes
Rose where the lepers huddled ere he
came,
Rotting in misery, and the pious care
Of brethren far away, learning his need,
Sent food and money for his aid, and
all
Was of his hand. And eager helpers
came,
Nor of his Church alone, though of his
Lord—
Brothers and sisters brave, who work
to-day
His blessed work, though he is dead
and gone.

Likewise he built a hospice, where the
sick
Were gently tended. There, through
every day,
He laboured in their midst, spake words
of hope,
Dressed their sad wounds, brought
them what delicate food
His means supplied, and when they
came to die
Paid the last rites, and with his own
hands laid
The dead in earth ; and when the plague
had rapt
Their hapless parents, 'twas his foster-
ing hand
Cared for the orphans, doomed, maybe,
to die
The same dread death, and pine mean-
while in pain.
And as faith's tide rose higher in their
souls
He, with his own hands, planned and
built a shrine
For long processions, and the solemn
Mass

Served upon purest gold. So the swift
days
Passed, and amid the misery around,
As one who bore a charmed life, the
saint
Laboured unscathed for twelve long
toilsome years,
A father to the orphan, to the sick
A kind physician, to the suffering
soul
A priest in every strait, and, when the
end
Was come, a reverent hand to close the
eyes
And smooth the maimed limbs, and lay
in earth
The poor dead clay whose life was hid
with God.

Thus toiled he full contented years ;
and then
The creeping numbness took him, and
he knew,
Though with no bodily sign as yet,
nor scar,
Nor strength diminished, that the
common doom
Waited him too. He did not quail,
nor pine
That those beneficent happy years had
reached
Their sure approaching term—the hand
of God
Was over all, health, sickness, life and
death—
'Fiat voluntas tua ;' and he toiled
With scarce diminished strength, and
zeal which knew
No shadow of abatement, all his days,
A leper like the rest. And when he
preached,
And when he laboured for the sick, or
did

His Church's solemn office, all his words
 Were of 'us lepers,' glorying in the load
 The will of Heaven assigned to him,
 and proud,
 Even as his dear Lord touched with
 healing hand
 The lepers of old time and made them
 whole,
 To be as these he loved in life and
 death.

And when his fading forces sank, there
 came
 A band of helpers, priests and brethren
 true,
 And ministering women, round his
 bed ;
 And there among his sick they labour
 still,
 With others whom his bright example
 since
 Inspired, lives dedicate like his to
 Heaven
 And all the struggling suffering Race
 of men,
 Working his work of mercy to the
 end.

Last, when, a year ago, his failing
 strength
 Laid him upon his bed, keeping the use
 Of his great Church, first would the
 good man make
 Confession of his sins, and thanksgiving
 Because the Lord had spared his life
 so long
 To do his work. Around his dying bed
 His people whom he succoured, a great
 throng
 Of maimed forms, swollen and scarred
 and bent

Out of all human semblance, came and
 wept,
 And raised their poor hoarse voices in
 the hymns
 He loved, and made a music dearer far
 To the All-hearing Ear than any strain
 Which skilful voices soaring to the
 vaults
 Of dim cathedrals raise; till when at
 last,
 After long weeks of suffering lit with
 prayer,
 He gave his spirit back to God, and went
 To be, at Easter, as he hoped, with
 Him
 Who rose before, and the low passing-
 bell
 Was heard, there went from that poor
 leprous throng
 A solemn wailing, as from those who
 know
 That they loved well and now had lost,
 a friend."

Even as he ceased my soul within me
 leapt
 In praise and thankfulness, and these
 her words :
 "Ah! blessed life which finds its
 happiness
 In succouring others, with what store
 of good—
 Good thoughts, good deeds, merciful
 energies—
 Didst thou ascend to Heaven, and take
 thy rest !
 I count not all, thy pangs of pain, or sense
 Of natural loathing overcome by love,
 Or the short years which brought their
 certain doom.
 These, saintly lives lit by the sun of
 Faith,

Despise : but to know failure in thy
 work,
 As thou didst oft; the souls which thou
 didst love
 Unfaithful, and the hiss of slander
 mock
 Thy purpose and thyself; to hear no
 voice
 Of praise save that within thee sent
 from Heaven
 Or some low faint applause of kindred
 souls,
 Far off almost as from a separate star,
 Whisper across the world, while the
 base din
 Of loud detraction smote men's ears;
 to long
 For home and feel thy own act banish
 thee,
 And know inexorable Nature lurk
 Behind thee, a deaf Fury pitiless,
 Wielding a scourge of fire; to ask
 sometimes
 In deep depression, as thy Master
 asked,
 'Hast Thou forsaken me?' and find no
 voice
 To answer thee, nor pity, nor reprieve
 For all thy sacrifice, nor favouring
 word—
 A martyrdom of years;—this were,
 indeed,
 Too hard to bear for any but a soul
 Fired as thine was, nay is, with love
 immense
 As Heaven itself, stronger than Life or
 Death—
 The love of God through weak and
 suffering man,
 The love of man through his Creator,
 God."

But many a saintly form I knew, and
 passed
 Without a word, because no vision long
 Endures, and that for all no mortal life
 Might well suffice. Did I not note thy
 fair
 Nude youthful grace, Sebastian—beau-
 tiful
 As young Apollo on the Olympian hill,
 Or Marsyas, his victim—fettered fast
 And pierced by rankling shafts while
 thou didst raise
 Thy patient eyes to Heaven? Saw I
 not thee,
 Oh sainted childlike Agnes, with thick
 locks
 Of gold, which, grown miraculously
 long,
 Guarded thy maiden modesty; or thee,
 S. Agatha, with thy white wounded
 breast—
 Martyrs and saints? Or thee of recent
 days,
 S. Vincent, who thy late-enfranchised
 years,
 Freed from the prison bonds thou long
 hadst borne,
 Didst spend in works of mercy, and
 didst care,
 As might a father, for the childish lives
 Forlorn which no man heeded? Saw
 I not
 Thee, saintly Jeremy, whose daily feet
 Paced 'neath the long-armed oaks of
 Golden Grove,
 Above our winding Towy; or thy mild,
 Benevolent gaze, good Howard, who
 didst die,
 Christ-like, for souls in prison? Saw
 I not,

Blessing our land, thy apostolic form,
 Dear Wesley, through whose white soul
 Love Divine
 Shone unrefracted, whose pure life was
 full
 Of love for God and man, whose faith-
 ful hand
 Relit the expiring fire, which sloth and
 sense
 And the sad world's unfaith had well-
 nigh quenched
 And left in ashes ; or thy saintly friend,
 Fletcher of Madeley, clean consumed
 of faith
 And ruth for perishing souls ; or thee,
 whose zeal
 Laid all thy learning at His feet who
 gave it,
 Eliot, apostle to the dying race
 Of the Red Indian, on their trackless
 plains
 Preaching in their own tongue the
 gracious news
 Thy learning opened ; or thy comely
 form,
 Brave Dorothy, who thy abounding life,
 'Neath smoke-stained skies, 'mid coarse
 and brutal souls,
 Gavest to the maimed and sick, content
 to be
 A happy life-long martyr, and didst die
 Alone at last of hopeless torture-pains
 Incurable, yet cheerful barest thy cross
 Even to the end ; or ye, oh priceless
 lives !
 After long years of terror, day and night,
 Till death itself seemed better than your
 dread,
 Shed for the Faith by many a savage isle
 Of the Pacific seas ; or ye whose graves
 'Mid fever-swamps or silent forest depths
 The Moslem slaver mocks, sent to sure
 death

For Africa. Nay, nay, I marked ye all,
 But might not tarry more, so vast has
 grown,
 Lost in dim eld, and longer, hour by
 hour,
 The ever-lengthening pageant of the
 Blest.

 And then I marked no other name
 men know,
 For now we passed along the close-set
 files
 Of saints and martyrs, bearing each the
 palm,
 Discerned no more by robes antique,
 or mien,
 Or speech, but of the modern centuries,
 And as we live to-day. So thick they
 rose
 Streaming from earth, as when the
 autumnal year
 Sheds its fair throng of meteors on the
 sky.
 So those pure souls, white with a
 glittering train
 Of light, flashed upward, till I might
 not take
 Count of their number, for of every race
 And hue and creed they came, of every
 age,
 Both young and old—all to the heavens
 above
 Ascending ; and an infinite thank-
 fulness
 Took me, and joy, because our day,
 that seems
 To some so void of faith, so full of pain
 And chilled with deadly doubt, not less
 than those
 The faithful ages might, sent forth its
 tale
 Of victories of the Faith. Nor bore
 they all

The name of Christ, but some there
 were who held
 The old unchanging Faith from whence
 He came
 Whom yet their fathers slew, and some
 who called
 On that ascetic Prince who draws the
 East
 With some faint law of Mercy and of
 Love
 For all created essences, one hope
 To be with God, even though Man's
 nature rush
 To His as doth the river to the sea,
 Absorbed in Him for ever; and of those
 To whom the fierce false Prophet call-
 ing, taught,
 Though stained with fanatic zeal and
 grovelling sense,
 Amid the noise of base idolatries,
 The unity of God, the pure, the wise,
 Who sits to judge the world; there
 came who left
 The sensual sty and rose above the
 din
 Of the world's wranglings, and who
 were indeed
 His saints, though Him they knew not.
 But of all
 The most part were of Him, each
 Christian race
 Sending its cloud of witnesses to swell
 The innumerable host. There, came
 the thralls
 Of Duty, willing servants old and young,
 Who love the bonds that bind them,
 knowing well
 Their fealty freedom; men who toil
 enchained
 Of household care, knowing not rest
 nor ease,
 For those they love, and live their briefer
 lives

Unmurmuring; and grave statesmen
 who toil on
 To the laborious end, though life sink
 low,
 Whom natural rest allures, but strive
 on still
 While the sharp tooth of slander gnaws
 their souls;
 Or women who have given their ease,
 their life,
 To weary cares, nor heed them if they
 know
 Their children happy; or who from the
 hush
 Of cloistered convents serve with prayer
 and praise;
 Or who amid the poor and lowly folk
 Of all the Churches, as their Master
 erst,
 Toil amid sin and pain, and are content
 To live compassionate days and ask no
 more
 Of wages for their service but, con-
 sumed
 Of pity, give their lives to save the lost
 And hopeless; or who love to minister,
 Spurning the weakness of their sex, the
 bloom
 Of delicate ease, and grace and luxury,
 And, 'mid the teeming homes of heal-
 ing, bend
 To succour bodily ill, while night by
 night
 The sick and maimed, in restless slum-
 bers tost,
 Lie groaning till the dawn, and cries of
 pain
 Wring the soft hearts whose duty binds
 them fast,
 While the gay festive hearths of friends
 or home
 Thrill with sweet music and the rhythmic
 feet

Of careless youth and joyance, and the
rose

And lily of their gentle girlhood wait
Their coming, but in vain, till youth is
past,

And with it earthly love. All these fair
souls

In one incessant effluence of light
Soared from the earth, the army of the
saints

Who in all time have set themselves to
work

The Eternal Will.

And yet not all of pain
And suffering were they, who thus leav-
ing earth,

Rose to high Heaven. To some, high
sacrifice

Is joy, not pain. For some, from youth
to age

The even current of their lives flows on,
Broken by scarce a ripple, scarce a cloud
Veiling the constant blue—the daily use
Of humble duty, the unchanging round
Of homely life ; the father's work, who
toils

Ungrudging day by day, from year to
year,

To keep the lives he loves, and dies too
soon

His children round his bed, nor knows
at all

The tremours of the saint ; the lowly
tasks

Which fill the unchanging round of busy
lives,

And keep them pure ; the willing,
cheerful care

Of mothers. Wert thou not among
the throng,

Dear life long fled, who, after tranquil
years

Unbroken and unclouded by great griefs

Or bodily pains, on the sad year's last day
Wentest from us ; who threescore years
and ten

Didst wear thy children's love ; whose
pitying hand

Was always open ; whose mild voice
and eye

Drew rich and poor alike, a soul that
soared

Not on great sacrifice, indeed, or high
And saintly pains, but trod life's level
plain

As 'twere high snows, and daily did
inform

Earth with some hue of Heaven ; on
whose loved tomb

No word is graven, save thy name and
date

Of birth and death, because it seemed
that none

Might fit the gracious life and beautiful,
Whose glory was its humbleness, whose
work,

Built of sweet acts and precious cour-
tesies,

The exemplar of a home ? Nay, well
I know

High Heaven were not Heaven, want-
ing thee

And such as thou. Within the gates
of God

Are many mansions, and each saintly
soul

Treads its own path, fills its own place,
but all

Are perfected and blest.

And yet how few
Of that great congress saw I. He who
keeps

Lone vigils with the stars notes on
night's face

Some ghostly, scarce-suspected vapour
gleam,

And turns his optic-glass to it; and, lo!
 A mist of suns! wherefrom the sensitive
 disc
 Fixes the rays, first scattered, then
 more dense
 With longer time, star after hidden star
 Stealing from out the unimagined void
 And twinkling into light, till on its face
 Those dark unplumbed abysses show
 no speck
 Of vacant gloom, a white and shining
 wall
 Of glomerated worlds, broad as the
 bound
 Which feeble fancy, yearning for an end,
 Builds round the verge of Space. So
 that bright throng
 Grew denser as I gazed, till Heaven
 was full
 Of the white cloud of witnesses, who
 still,
 As always since the worlds and Time
 began,
 Stand round the throne of God.

Then while I gazed,
 As in that vision fair which filled the
 eyes
 Of the blest seer of Patmos, suddenly
 The angels with veiled faces cast them
 down
 Prostrate, and then a peal of glorious
 sound,
 Mightier than any sound of earth,
 which chased
 My dream, and well-remembered words
 I heard:
 "Blessing and Glory, Wisdom, Thanks-
 giving,
 Honour, and Power, and Might be
 unto Thee
 For ever and for ever."

Then methought
 My soul made answer:

"Yea, and victory
 Over Thy Evil. Not Thy saints alone
 Are Thine, and if one soul were lost
 to Thee,
 Thine arm were shortened. All the
 myriad lives
 Which are not here, but pine in bitter
 dole,
 Do Thou redeem at last, after what
 toils
 Thou wilt, in Thine own time, of Thine
 own will,
 Purged, if Thou wilt, by age-long lustral
 pain,
 Banished for long. Yet through new
 spheres untried
 Of Being let them rise, sinner and
 saint,
 Higher and higher still, till all shall
 move
 In harmony with Thee and Thy great
 Scheme,
 Which doth transcend the bounds of
 Earth and Time;
 Still let them work Thy work. Yet
 bring them home;
 Let none be lost! For see how far
 Thy Heavens
 Are higher than our earth, how brief
 the tale
 Of little years we live, how low and
 small
 Our weak offence, transgression of a
 child
 Grown petulant, on whom the father
 looks
 With pity, not with wrath. On those
 dead souls
 Which unillumined in the outer depths
 Lie yet, too gross for Heaven, send
 Thou a beam
 From Thy great Sun, and, piercing
 through them, wake

The good that slept on earth : and, like
 the throb
 Of radiant light which pulses through
 the mist
 With which Thy Space is sown, and
 wakes new worlds,
 Atom by atom drawn or else repelled ;
 Or as the vibrant subtle note which
 thrills
 Upon the sensitive film, and traces
 on it
 Figure on figure, curve with curve
 inlaced
 Into some perfect flower ; so do Thou,
 Lord,
 Sound with Thy light and voice the
 dumb dark depths
 And, working on the unnumbered souls
 which lie
 Far from Thee, shine and call, and,
 waking in them
 A latent order, purge them. Make
 their will
 Harmonious with the Will which
 governs all,
 And orb into some higher form, and
 start
 As Thy new worlds to life, till all Thy
 skies
 Shine with recovered souls. Then shall
 it be
 As those great voices would, and Thou
 fulfilled
 Alike in Earth and Heaven."

But as I woke
 To this poor world again, almost with
 tears,
 Not wholly did the vision fade, but still
 Those high processions lingering with
 me seemed

To purify my soul. What was the
 world,
 Its low designs and hopes, its earth-
 born joys,
 Base grovelling pleasures, and unfruit-
 ful pains,
 To those and such as they—those eyes
 that saw
 Not earth, but Heaven ; those stainless
 feet that trod
 Through lilled meads of saintly sacri-
 fice
 And strange unearthly snows ? Surely
 'twas well
 To have seen them clearer than the
 mists of earth
 Concede to waking hours. Come thou
 again,
 Fair dream, and often, till thou art a
 dream
 No more, but waking. March to
 victory,
 Great army, from the legendary Past,
 Through the brief Present, where Life's
 pilgrims toil
 To-day, and rise triumphant, or fall
 prone,
 Prest by their load ; through that un-
 noted tract
 Of the dim Future which our thought
 pourtrays,
 Far fairer than the world's sad Past ;
 which yet
 Shall have its struggles too, its sins, its
 wrongs,
 Its saints, its martyrs !
 March in spotless line,
 Lengthening the ranks of those who,
 gone before,
 Are now triumphant, till the End shall
 come,
 Which hushes all our lower strifes,
 attunes

Discords to harmonies, rounds and
makes complete

The cycles of our Lives; till Sacri-
fice

And Pain are done, and Death, and the
Dread Dawn

Breaks which makes all things new,
and the great Sun

Rising upon the worlds, dispels the
Night

Of Man's sad Past, and routs the
gathered clouds

Of Evil, and ascends a Conqueror,
Wielding full splendours of unwaning

Day
For ever !

THE END.

(m)

Long
man 1716
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